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GARDENS ILLUSTRATED

EXPERT GUIDE

how to plant a bulb meadow

PLUS ORGANIC BULBS OFFER

BLAZING A TRAIL

spectacular late summer gardens

DESIGN IDEAS

for a compact courtyard

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benefits of a gravel garden

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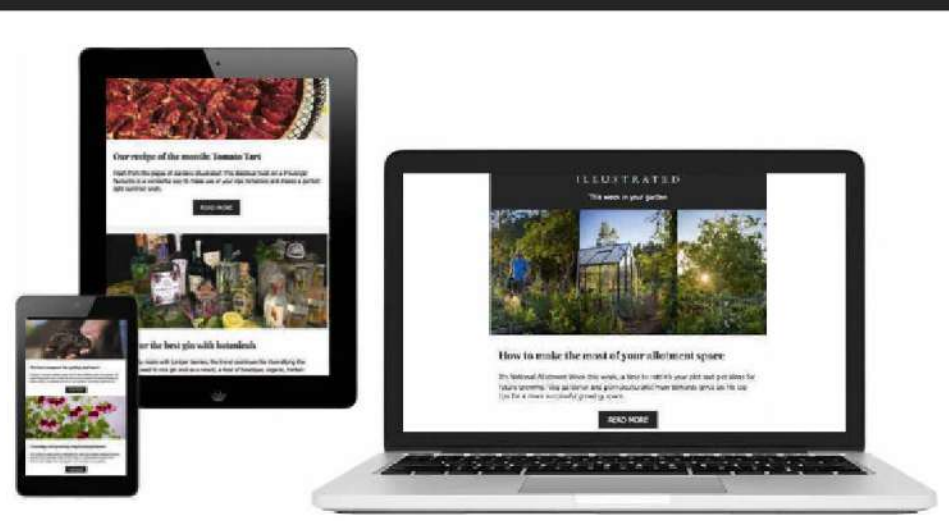

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Welcome

JOHN CAMPBELL

By the time you read this our gardens will hopefully have been refreshed by a reasonable amount of the right sort of rain and our water butts replenished. Our countryside and rivers will be reviving to a more familiar, now oh-so precious green landscape.

More and more 'new-style' gardens have been appearing in our pages – those with drought-tolerant planting, with bioswales to cope with flooding, with an aesthetic that responds more to the wider landscape rather than fighting it – but it often takes an event, such as the recent drought and really seeing the effects first hand, to properly shift our thinking. Hopefully, we are all keen to play our part and much of this comes down to the willingness to change and to trying to do things differently.

In this issue, we discover how the garden at Admington Hall is one of experimentation and how owner Antonia Davies has admitted her mistakes and taken learnings from these (page 32). Tillingham Winery has made it its mission to learn anew. The vineyard is managed regeneratively with the aim of adding to the health and biodiversity of what was farmland. In line with its ethos, designer Marian Boswall was asked to create a low-maintenance, sustainable garden amid the old farm buildings – with the aim of reusing as many materials as possible (page 40).

And planning ahead. Bulb-planting time is in sight so we asked three inspirational planting designers to create bulb meadows for us (page 80) – not the more artful, annual displays, more a scheme for a long season of spring interest, which reappears year on year. Their ideas fit a 1m-squared plot, or can be upscaled for a larger area of grass.

Here's to thinking anew.

Stephanie Mahon

STEPHANIE MAHON, EDITOR

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KATY DONALDSON

Fritillaria imperialis 'Orange Beauty' is the showstopping centrepiece for Jo Thompson's bulb meadow scheme, page 80.

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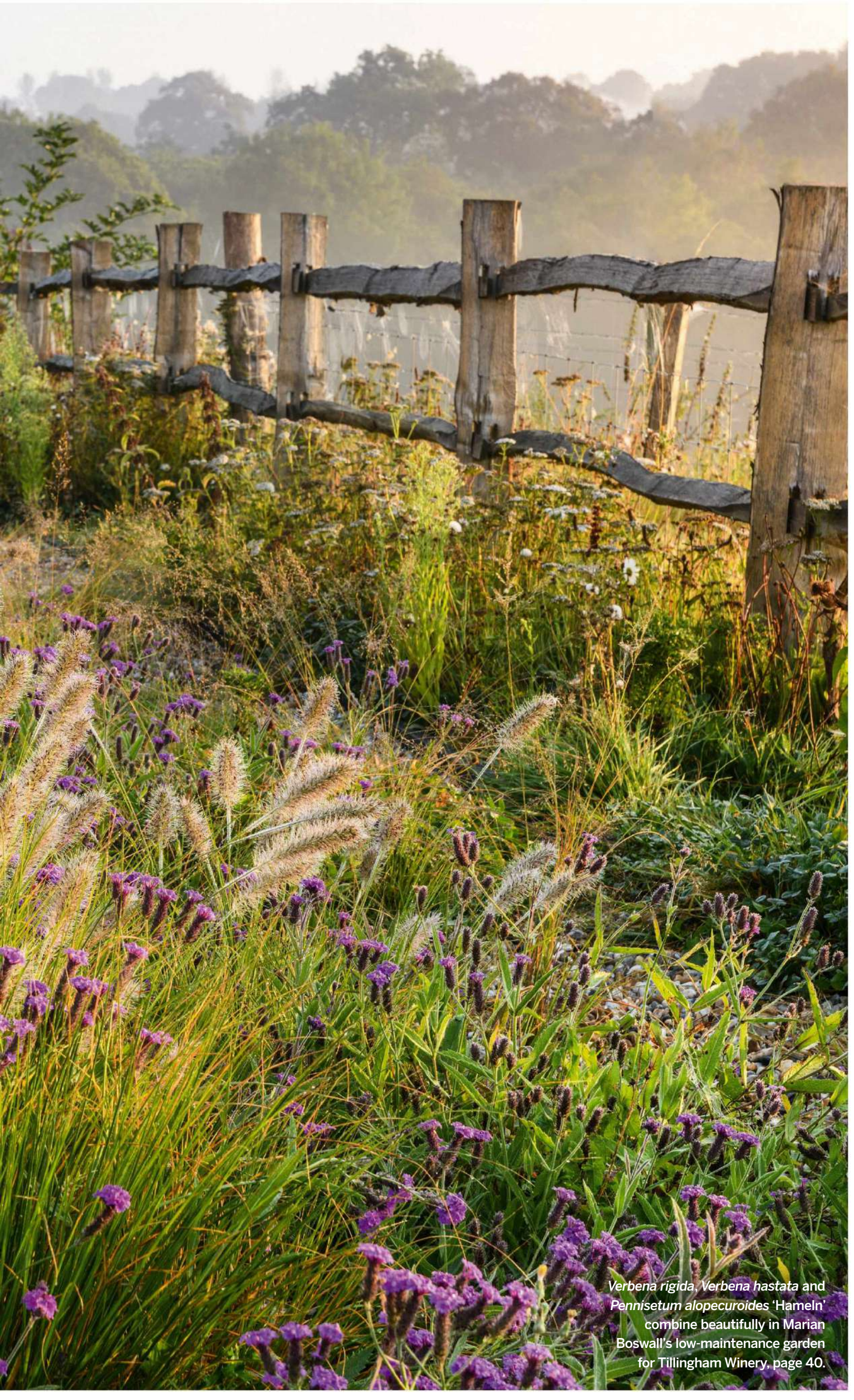
JASON INGRAM



Verbena rigida, *Verbena hastata* and *Pennisetum alopecuroides* 'Hameln' combine beautifully in Marian Boswall's low-maintenance garden for Tillingham Winery, page 40.

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SEE PAGE 26

COVER IMAGE

Helenium 'Fox Cub' by Éva Németh

ON THE COVER

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EVENTS AND OFFERS

- Download any of our expert online talks from the latest *Gardens Illustrated* Masterclass series – page 8
- Save money when you subscribe to the digital edition of *Gardens Illustrated* – page 26
- Save 15 per cent on organically grown naturalising bulbs from organicbulbs.com† – page 114

* Niwaki bundle available only to UK subscribers; 20 per cent saving available only to UK subscribers paying by Direct Debit.

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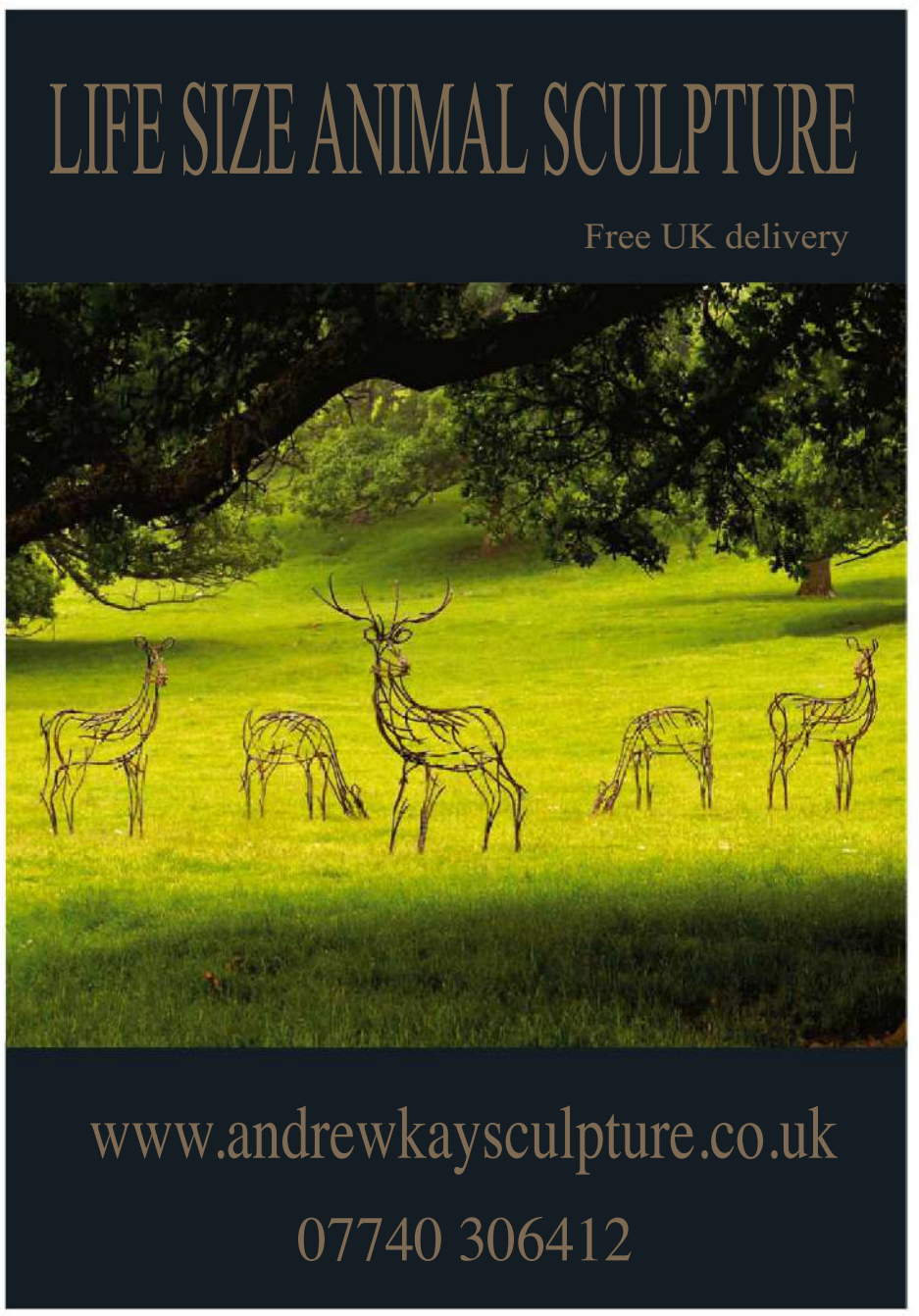

Contributors

Stephanie Donaldson
Stephanie visits Tillingham Winery, page 40. *"An inspiring example of how a seemingly hostile environment can support planting that thrives on no water."*

Rachel Warne
Rachel photographs a London garden, page 76. *"What struck me about this garden was the way that Miria Harris has linked the Victorian house with its modern extension; it doesn't jar, it flows."*

Tom Eaglestone
Tom is one of three leading designers who suggests ideas for planting a spring meadow with bulbs, page 80. *"Planting a bulb meadow is such an exciting and rewarding thing to do."*

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James Basson
James lives in the South of France where he runs Scape Design, a practice specialising in low-maintenance and dry gardens. He is a fervent advocate for creating sustainable landscapes. The winner of four Chelsea Gold medals, he was awarded Best in Show in 2017.

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Fergus was appointed head gardener at Great Dixter by Christopher Lloyd in 1993. He is passionate about passing on his knowledge through student programmes at Dixter and worldwide lectures. He was awarded an RHS Associate of Honour in 2008 and an RHS Victoria Medal of Honour in 2019.

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Anna's books include her bestseller *The Tulip* and most recently *Landskipping*. For 30 years she was *The Independent*'s gardening correspondent. In 2000 the RHS awarded her the Veitch Memorial Medal. She lives and gardens in Dorset.

Dan Pearson
Dan is one of the UK's best-known garden designers, familiar to many through his gardening columns in the *Observer* magazine. Eight of his gardens, including the Tokachi Millennium Forest in Japan, have won awards and he was awarded Best in Show for his garden at Chelsea in 2015.

Sarah Price
Sarah is one of the UK's most sought-after garden designers who gained worldwide recognition for her designs for the 2012 London Olympic Park. She won Gold at Chelsea in 2012 and 2018, and was GMG Garden Columnist of the Year in 2016 for her design series in *Gardens Illustrated*.

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Standard subscription rates: UK £64.87 per annum; Eire and Europe €79 for 13 issues; rest of the world US$112 for 13 issues. Distribution Frontline, Peterborough. US distribution Source IPD/Speedimpex. Email intlquery@seymour.co.uk. Printed in the UK by William Gibbons Ltd. *Gardens Illustrated* (ISSN 0968-8920) (USPS 015-608) is published 13 times a year (monthly with a Summer issue in June) by Our Media Ltd (an Immediate Group Company), Eagle House, Bristol BS1 4ST, UK. Distributed in the USA by NPS Media Group, 2 Corporate Drive, Ste. 945, Shelton, CT 06484. Periodical postage paid at Shelton, CT and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Gardens Illustrated*, PO Box 37495, Boone, IA 50037-0495. Unsolicited manuscripts or artwork are accepted on the understanding that the publishers incur no liability for their storage or return. The contents of this magazine are fully protected by copyright and may not be reproduced without permission. The *Gardens Illustrated* cover is printed on 250gsm FSC Amadeus produced in Belgium by Burgo. The Immediate Media Company Limited is working to ensure that all of its paper is sourced from well-managed forests. This magazine can be recycled for use in newspapers and packaging. Please remove any gifts, samples or wrapping and dispose of it at your local collection point. All prices are correct at time of going to press.
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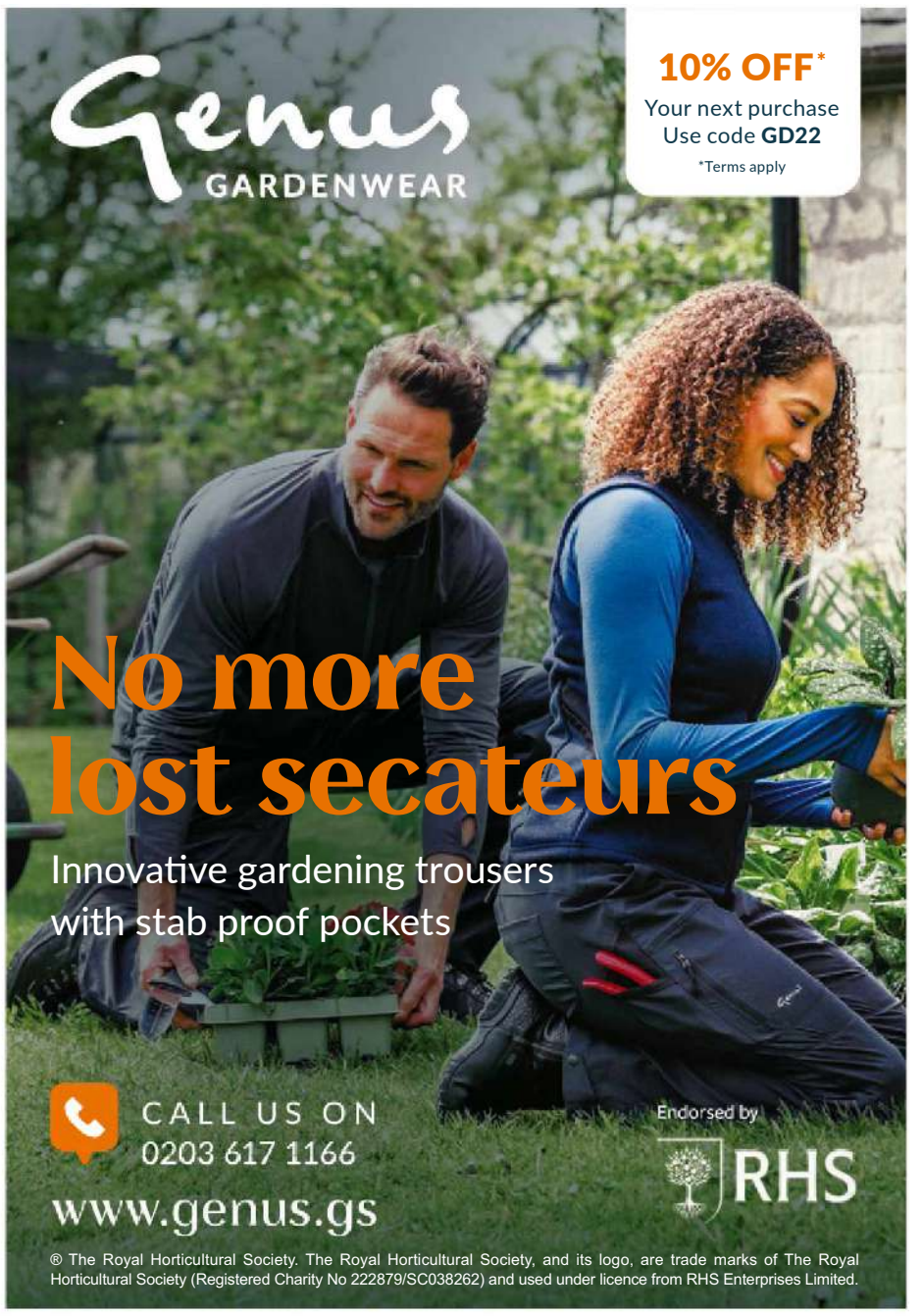

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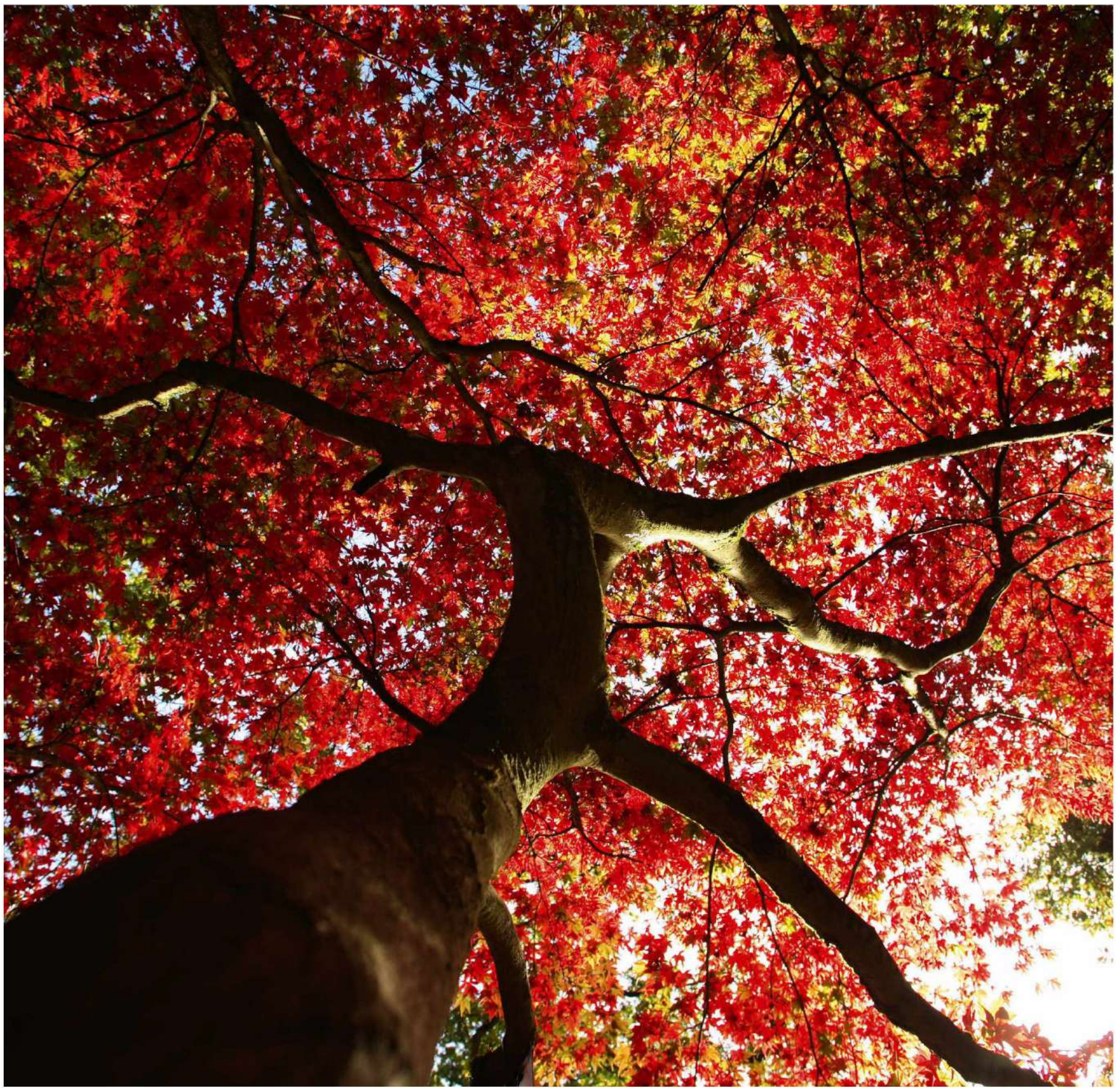
DIG IN

What's new, what's growing and what's going on this month



IAIN GREEN

How to save our trees

The summer's record temperatures brought the reality of our changing climate sharply into focus, and made it all the more worrying that, according to the 2021 State of the World's Trees Report, one in three tree species is threatened with extinction in the wild. More than 100 of these threatened species can be found at Westonbirt Arboretum in Gloucestershire, which has produced a new guide, *The Little Book of Disappearing Trees,* to highlight the dangers affecting tree populations – one of the planet's best defences against climate chaos – and show how we all can help protect them. It costs £4.95 from the Westonbirt Shop (**fowa.org.uk**). You can also read more about the at-risk trees at **gardensillustrated.com/plants/trees/extinction-risk-trees**

News

COMPILED BY MOLLY BLAIR

ROMAN POPELAR

SEASONAL SHIFT

To celebrate the autumnal equinox, Heckfield Place in Hampshire is hosting The Assembly, a programme of events that encapsulates the turn of the seasons. On 17 September, award-winning landscape and garden designers David and Harry Rich (right) will be giving a talk on A Sense of Place, an idea central to their design ethos. On 18 September there will be a basket-weaving workshop with Felicity Irons, and at dusk a walk around the estate with author Louisa Thomsen Brits, whose book *Path* explores the connection between humans and landscape. **heckfieldplace.com**

NATIONAL TRUST IMAGES / JONATHAN BUCKLEY

Shop at Sissinghurst

The Plant Fairs Roadshow is heading to the beautiful gardens created by Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson at Sissinghurst Castle this month. This special event, in support of the National Garden Scheme, offers the chance to browse some of the South East's best specialist nurseries, including Hardy's Cottage Garden Plants, Copton Ash and Daisy Roots, and also explore this iconic garden with its famous White Garden and newly reimagined Delos Garden. 18 September, 11am-3pm. **plant-fairs.co.uk**

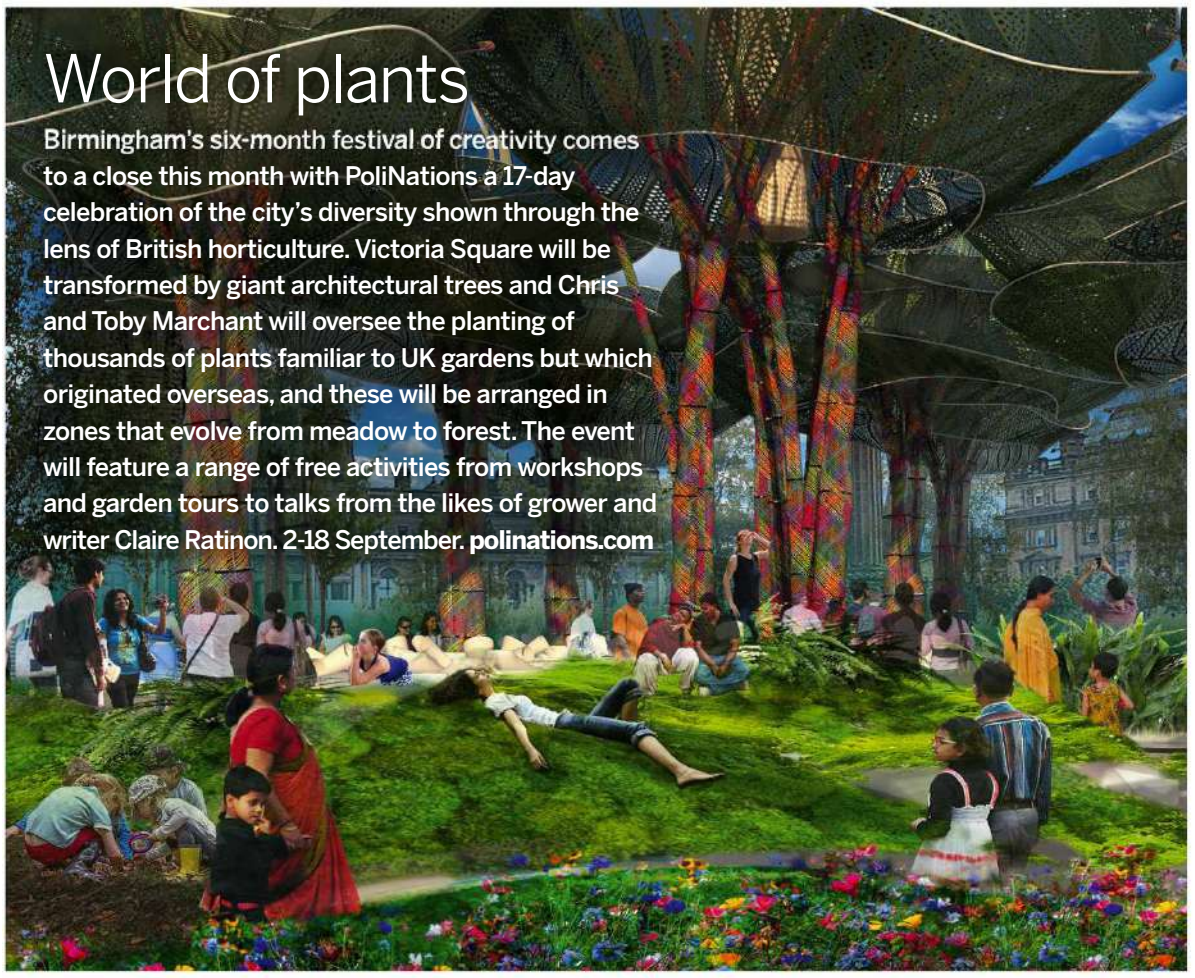
ON COURSE

Create Academy is launching two new online courses with Bridget Elworthy and Henrietta Courtauld (right), better known as The Land Gardeners. First up is A Year of Cut Flowers, which will focus on growing flowers for year-round cutting, followed by How to Heal Your Soil, drawing on the pair's research into compost and soil health. Both cost £127 but *Gardens Illustrated* readers can win full lifetime access to one of the courses by entering our online competition at **gardensillustrated.com/competitions**

DEBORAH GRACE PHOTOGRAPHY

Saving grace

Plant Heritage has named a rare and graceful pink peony with an exquisite perfume as Threatened Plant of the Year 2022. *Paeonia lactiflora* 'Gleam of Light' was first recorded in Kelway's Nursery catalogue in 1954, but hasn't been commercially available for more than five years. The only known plant in the UK is cared for by Roz Cooper as part of Plant Heritage's Plant Guardian scheme, but she has recently provided plant material to fellow enthusiast Caroline Stone who is building what she hopes will become a National Plant Collection of herbaceous peonies bred by Kelway Nurseries. **plantheritage.org.uk**



World of plants

Birmingham's six-month festival of creativity comes to a close this month with PoliNations a 17-day celebration of the city's diversity shown through the lens of British horticulture. Victoria Square will be transformed by giant architectural trees and Chris and Toby Marchant will oversee the planting of thousands of plants familiar to UK gardens but which originated overseas, and these will be arranged in zones that evolve from meadow to forest. The event will feature a range of free activities from workshops and garden tours to talks from the likes of grower and writer Claire Ratinon. 2-18 September. polinations.com

TRIGGER, THISS, CARL ROBERTSHAW, BRONIA HOUSMAN

Change of direction

The pandemic may have been the catalyst that prompted many to consider a change of career, but interest in training for a career in horticulture is proving to be no passing lockdown fad. This year the Royal Horticultural Society saw close to a 25 per cent rise in applications for its Diploma in Horticultural Practice, nearly six times as many applicants as places. If you want to join this growing group of gardening professionals, your first stop should be enrolling on an RHS Level 2 Certificate, which this autumn sees some exciting changes to its curriculum that will give new gardeners the skills they need to succeed in today's horticultural workplace. To find your nearest course head to **rhs.org.uk/findacentre**

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DIARY: SEPTEMBER

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❶ A Delicate Balance – Sculpture Trail
Explore the abstract works of Borders-based sculptor Susheila Jamieson at Dawyck Botanic Garden in the Scottish Borders. Her sculptures, made in Kilkenny limestone or Portland stone, can be found throughout the beautiful gardens. Until 30 November, 10am-5pm. From £8. Dawyck Botanic Gardens, Stobo, Peeblesshire EH45 9JU. Tel 01721 760254, rbge.org.uk

❷ Arranging with Dahlias Workshop
Learn to create a beautiful display with dahlias you have picked yourself from the Pod & Pip cutting garden. This two-hour workshop includes coffee and cake. 10 September, 10am-12pm. £75. Pod & Pip, Ebble House, Stratford Tony, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP5 4AT. Tel 07766 775869, podandpip.co.uk

❸ Beautiful & Useful Fair
Shop from some of Britain's best designer-makers for ceramics, wood and textiles among other crafts, in the stunning setting of Sussex Prairie Garden. 17-18 September, 11am-5pm. £10. Sussex Prairie Garden, Morlands Farm, Wheatsheaf Road, nr Henfield, West Sussex BN5 9AT. Tel 01273 495 902, sussexprairies.co.uk

❹ The Fabric of Flowers – Gardening with Silk and Gold Thread
Discover how gardens and flowers have influenced textiles in this six-part online lecture series from The Gardens Trust. Lectures will explore some of the historical and technical aspects of embroidery, weaving and printing, from Elizabethan crowns to 19th-century wall hangings (right). Every Monday for six weeks, starting 19 September, 6-7.30pm. £5 each, or £24 for all six. thegardenstrust.org

❺ Planting for Year-Round Colour
Join a one-day course at the Norfolk School of Gardening to discover how to plan and plant for year-round colour. 21 September, 10am-3pm. £85. Ketteringham Hall, Church Road, Ketteringham, Wymondham, Norfolk NR18 9RS. norfolkschoolofgardening.co.uk

❻ Basketry for Beginners
Learn how to weave with willow on this one-day course with basket weaver Christiane Gunzi. 21 September, 10am-4pm. £120, including vegetarian lunch. The Garden House, 5 Warleigh Road, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 4NT. Tel 07729 037182, gardenhousebrighton.co.uk

❼ Strawberry Hill House Flower Festival Masterclass
Tour the dazzling florists' creations at the fourth Strawberry Hill House Flower Festival before joining a masterclass with florist to royalty Shane Connolly and flower farmer Polly Nicholson. 23 September, 6.15pm. £25. Strawberry Hill House & Garden, 268 Waldegrave Road, Twickenham, Surrey TW1 4ST. Tel 020 8744 1241, strawberryhillhouse.org.uk

❽ Gardens in Renaissance Art
Take part in a live interactive online course as garden historian Twigs Way explores the impact of the Renaissance on horticulture and garden design, and how these ideas spread from southern Europe to Britain. 23 September, 10am-1pm. £25. botanic.cam.ac.uk

❾ Stylish Autumn Containers
Petersham Nurseries' florist Thomas Broom-Hughes (right) will lead the way as you learn to create an autumn display that celebrates the changing of the seasons. 27 September, 11am-1.30pm. £75. Petersham Nurseries, Church Lane, Richmond, Surrey TW10 7AB. petershamnurseries.com

❿ Composting with Sue Mabberley
Learn the theory behind composting and varying techniques on how to compost on this one-day workshop in Somerset with Sue Mabberley, creator of Nant-y-Bedd garden. Also includes a look at Damson Farm's compost systems with designer and owner Alison Jenkins. 28 September, 10am-4pm. £90, including vegetarian lunch. Damson Farm, Northend, Somerset BA1 8ES. Tel 07956 267173, alisonjenkins.co.uk

⓫ Green Rooms Market
Find houseplants, pots, plant hangers, terrariums and anything else you might need for your indoor jungle at FarGo Village when the pop-up botanical market Green Rooms arrives in Coventry. 1-2 October, 10am-4pm. Entry is free. FarGo Village, Far Gosford Street, Coventry CV1 5ED. greenroomsmarket.com

All information is correct at time of going to press, but may be subject to change.
Tickets for events may be limited and may have to be booked in advance.

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1. Handmade Stoneware Kombucha Jar, white, 2.5L, £75, and **Handmade Stoneware Fermenting Crock,** white, 2L, £59.99, both 0800 270 7591, souschef.co.uk **2. Masontops Pickle Packer,** acacia wood, £12.99, amazon.co.uk **3. Kilner Homemade Sauce Press,** 1L, £40, 0151 486 1888, kilnerjar.co.uk **4. Vegetable Harvesting Knife,** £15.95, 0345 605 2505, worm.co.uk **5. Flower and Herb Drying Rack,** £36.99, 01480 774555, marshallsgarden.com **6. Professional Steel Preserving Pan with Lid,** 9L, £59, 0330 100 1010, procook.co.uk **7. Kilner Jar Tongs,** £12.50, 0151 486 1888, kilnerjar.co.uk **8. Potato Bag with Button Tie Closure,** £7.99, 015394 88100, lakeland.co.uk **9. Glass Weck Juice Bottle,** with lid, ring and clips, 0.5L, £15.62 for 6, 01698 311080, ab-handling.com

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VERNONIA ARKANSANA ‘MAMMUTH’

This improved form of the Arkansas ironweed is a tough perennial with stiff, upright stems that are feathered with lance-shaped, grey-green leaves. It blooms in late summer offering clusters of fluffy, rosy-mauve flowers. These develop into fluffy, rust-coloured seedheads – hence its common name ironweed. These elegant stems look good throughout the winter and should be cut down at the beginning of spring. Works well with tall grasses such as *Miscanthus sinensis* that also keep good structure through winter. AGM*.

Height and spread 2m x 1m.
Origin Garden (species east central USA).
Conditions Rich and fertile soil; full sun or partial shade.
Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 5a-8b†.
Season of interest August – October.

CHARLIE HOPKINSON

September plants

Tom keeps the interest going in the autumn borders, with a dazzling, late-blooming, orange kniphofia, a vibrant ginger lily and shades of blue from salvia and scabious

WORDS TOM COWARD PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM

Tom Coward is head gardener at Gravetye Manor in West Sussex
gravetyemanor.co.uk

AUSTRODERIA RICHARDII

Formerly in the genus *Cortaderia*, the toetoe is closely related to South American pampas grass, albeit far more graceful. I once had the privilege of seeing a large population of this plant in New Zealand on a steep hillside on the shores of the Southern Ocean, where I fell in love with it immediately. Tall, elegantly arching flowerheads wave above tough, evergreen foliage and seem to catch the light in a very particular way. At Gravetye it is a well-behaved, trouble-free plant that simply needs a tidy each spring. Flowers much earlier than other pampas grasses. AGM.

Height and spread 2.5m x 2.5m.
Origin South Island, New Zealand.
Conditions Alkaline to neutral soil; full sun. Tolerant of sea winds.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 5a-9b.
Season of interest June – February.

CLERODENDRUM BUNGEI

An excellent, late-flowering shrub with large, rounded clusters of scented, rose-pink flowers that show off against its dark-coloured stems. The large, heart-shaped leaves are also very attractive and smell of Marmite when crushed. It will sucker moderately vigorously, although these are easily controlled by chopping them out with a spade where they're not wanted. We tend to prune ours back hard in winter, shaping the clump from hip height to shoulder height. A good performer for dry shade.

Height and spread 2.5m x 2.5m, depending on pruning and suckering.
Origin China.
Conditions Moist, but well-drained soil, and will tolerate relatively dry soils; full sun or part shade.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 7a-10b.
Season of interest August – October.

ACTAEA SIMPLEX 'JAMES COMPTON'

This lovely baneberry was named by Piet Oudolf for the accomplished botanist Dr James Compton, who has done much to classify this wonderful genus. It has deeply cut leaves that start out dark green and mature to a deep purple, along with elegant spikes of fragrant, creamy-white flowers that emerge from pink buds, with a beautiful fragrance. Taller than most actaeas, it works best in a shady, moist border and looks stunning with the backdrop of *Cornus alternifolia* 'Argentea' with its delicate, variegated foliage. AGM.

Height and spread 1.5m x 1m.
Origin Garden (species Europe, Asia and North America).
Conditions Moist soil; light shade.
Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.
Season of interest Foliage April – November; flowers September.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.

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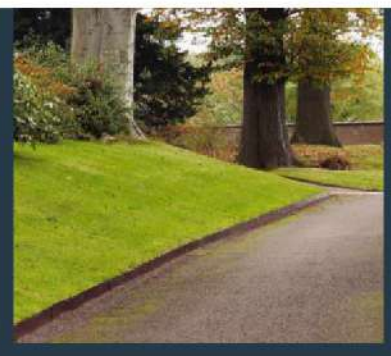

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KNIPHOFIA ROOPERI

One of the latest-flowering red hot pokers and a great plant for lighting up the border in early autumn. This is a tough customer that will tolerate temperatures below -10°C. It copes in most situations, but performs best in full sun with good drainage. Throughout the season it has neat, olive-green, strap-like leaves that blend in subtly, making it useful even at the front of the border. Flowering starts at the end of September through October, with plump, egg-shaped flowers on sturdy, waist-high stems that are iridescent orange, fading to yellow and are radiant in the autumn light. AGM.

Height and spread 1.5m x 1m.
Origin South Africa.
Conditions Free-draining but moisture-retentive soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 7a-10b.
Season of interest September – October.

SALVIA PATENS 'SPECIAL GIANT'

We got this most wonderful salvia from Derry Watkins at her nursery Special Plants. It's a seedling she raised from *Salvia patens* 'Guanjauato' but it is hardier and has larger flowers. These enormous, yet delicate, pure-blue flowers appear from June until first frosts, and although it flowers best in full sun, this blue looks stunning in dappled shade, and we enjoy growing it in a pot, so we can move it around and show it off. In winter it dies back to a tuber and can be treated like a dahlia. We like to start it off early under glass to give the cuttings time to make good plants.

Height and spread 1m x 60cm.
Origin Garden (species Mexico).
Conditions Moist, fertile soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H3, USDA 8a-10b.
Season of interest July – October.

HEDYCHIUM 'TARA'

This is one of the most reliable, hardy ginger lilies, with dramatic, strap-like, blue-green leaves that appear in June, followed by large, dense racemes of fragrant, exotic-looking, rich-orange flowers. The long, prominent, red stamen that emerges from each flower gives this magnificent inflorescence an extra layer of fascination. Although it is hardy here at Gravetye, it is best planted in a sheltered, well-drained spot and given a generous mulch in the autumn to protect the crown from cold weather. AGM.

Height and spread 2m x 1.5m.
Origin Southeast Asia.
Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun, in a sheltered spot.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 7a-10b.
Season of interest Foliage June – November; flowers September – October.

Places to visit

Tom's recommendations for places to see seasonal plants at their best

Be sure to check opening times. Some garden visits may need to be pre-booked.

The fascinating project that is **Sussex Prairie Garden** first opened to the public in 2009, after Paul and Pauline McBride returned to their family farm following years working as garden designers in Luxembourg. Having planned and created gardens in Europe, they wanted to plant their own dream garden.

The initial planting established 35,000 plants over an eight-acre site. The work required for this first stage was massive but luckily the couple had the support of 40 friends and family who got stuck in to help. The majority of these plants were large groupings of herbaceous perennials in stunning combinations, within enormous beds based on the shape of a spiralling nautilus shell. Between the beds are broad grass walks while smaller bark-chip paths take you inside the borders, encouraging you to immerse yourself in the planting.

The hard work has paid off and the plantings are glorious, on an impressive scale. The use of contrast, harmony and proportion is inspirational with such exciting plant selections. This is a garden to showcase herbaceous perennials at their most impressive. Morlands Farm, Wheatsheaf Road, nr Henfield, West Sussex BN5 9AT. Tel 01273 495902, sussexprairies.co.uk

There are many things for plant lovers to enjoy in the Netherlands' eastern province of Gelderland, but the beautiful garden at **De Wiersse** truly is a hidden gem to discover. One of ▷

DIASCIA VIGILIS 'JACK ELLIOTT'

A lovely, soft-pink twinspur that simply never stops flowering. It was kindly given to one of our garden team by Elizabeth Strangman, the former owner of Washfield Nursery in Kent, and after many years of cultivation it has become one of our firm favourites. It can be cut back at any time if it begins to look straggly and will only respond with more flowers. Easily propagated by cuttings each year so that there is a succession of young plants. Beautiful at the front of the border with *Stipa tenuissima* and *Erigeron karvinskianus*.

Height and spread 30cm x 30cm.
Origin South Africa.
Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H3, USDA 7a-9b.
Season of interest June – November.

SUCCISA PRATENSIS

The devil's bit scabious is a beautiful wildflower found in meadows and hedgerows throughout the UK, preferring damper, clay soils. At Gravetye it is abundant, creating a violet-blue mist in our meadows at the end of the season, delaying the mowing until October. It is also a beautiful addition to borders and shrubberies, and makes an excellent combination in the wild garden with *Crocosmia* 'Citronella'. Seed is best sown in autumn and planted out as plugs in the spring, but it can also be sown direct.

Height and spread 1m x 50cm.
Origin British Isles, western and central Europe.
Conditions Moisture-retentive soil; full sun or partial shade.
Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 5a-8b.
Season of interest September – October.

DAHLIA MERCKII

A species dahlia from Mexico that is used in the breeding of most of the garden hybrids we grow today. It has a dainty habit and flowers abundantly all summer, with pretty, nodding flowers ranging from almost white to pink, lilac and magenta. It is easy to grow from seed, flowering in the first year from an early spring sowing. A single packet will give a good range of colour and the best forms can be kept to grow on and propagated by dividing the tubers or taking cuttings. It is also fun to collect seed from plants that may have hybridised with the other dahlias in the garden to see what pops up.

Height and spread 1.5m x 1m.
Origin Mexico.
Conditions Fertile soil; full sun and shelter.
Hardiness RHS H3, USDA 8a-11.
Season of interest July – October.

▷ the remarkable things about this garden is that it has been managed by the same family since 1678, resulting in a landscape that has subtly developed over the generations.

Much of the structure for this romantic garden dates from 1913 when the very talented, 17-year-old Alice de Stuers designed and planted the rose garden. She went on to build and plant a sunken garden as well as a kitchen garden. In 1918 she married the Irishman WE Gatacer (Ted to his friends), who had been a prisoner of war in the Netherlands during the First World War. Their marriage brought a new influence to De Wierssie and as soon as the war ended, the couple set about creating an Irish-influenced wild garden, surrounding the moated Dutch Manor. Meadows contrasting with clipped topiary, and exotic woodland plantings charm you under the shade of majestic oaks. Sometimes the garden engulfs you and then opens out to beautiful vistas with Dutch cattle grazing in the distance.

The care of this beautiful garden was passed on from Alice and Ted to their son Peter and his wife Laura, who from 1978 continued to plant bulbs, trees and woodland plants giving us the masterpiece we see today. Laura continues to garden every day but her daughter Mary has now taken on the management of the estate. Wiersserallee 9, 7251 LH Vorden, the Netherlands. Tel +31 (0)575 723 086, dewiersse.com

Not far from De Wierssie, **Kwekerij De Hessenhof** is one of the most remarkable nurseries in Europe. An amazing collection of perennial plants assembled by growing conditions and grown to perfection by Hans and Miranda Kramer. The nursery is open Thursday to Saturday, 9am-5pm. Hessenweg 41, 6718 TC Ede, the Netherlands. Tel +31 (0)318 617334, hessenhof.nl

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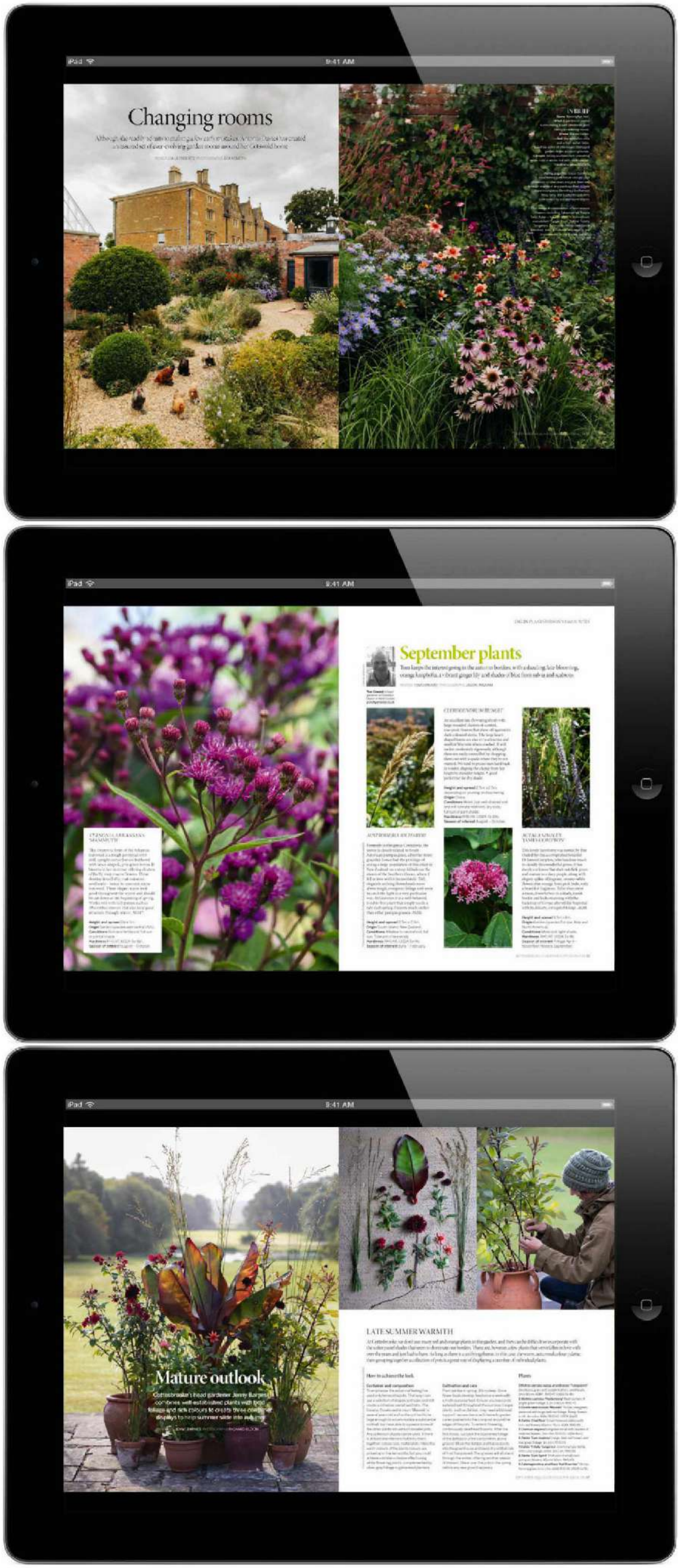

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ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

Future facing

Cancer Research UK has helped develop many life-saving cancer treatments, but this wouldn't have been possible without gifts in Wills

It's estimated that one in two people in the UK born after 1960 will get cancer in their lifetime[1]. But thanks to advances in prevention, diagnosis and treatment, cancer survival in the UK has doubled in the past 40 years, and Cancer Research UK (CRUK) has been at the heart of the research helping to drive that progress.

This year marks 20 years since the charity was formed, and 120 years since the founding of its predecessor, the Imperial Cancer Research Fund. In that time, 'gifts' (or donations) left in Wills have helped it become a driving force for many different life-saving cancer treatments, including radiotherapy and chemotherapy. It's also helped develop olaparib, a targeted drug that's now a well-established treatment option for ovarian cancer.

Beating ovarian cancer

Olaparib (Lynparza) is a routinely used option to treat ovarian cancer in patients who have BRCA gene faults. CRUK contributed to research that discovered cancer cells with these faults have a poor repair system and that olaparib stops the PARP enzyme, which would normally repair them, from working, making the cells more likely to die. In addition to this scientific breakthrough, the charity also played a leading role in the first clinical trials for the drug.

This work has led to other new treatments, such as the combination of olaparib and bevacizumab, which has recently been made available for advanced ovarian cancer in Scotland. Evidence shows patients using both drugs go longer without their cancer growing than those given bevacizumab alone. Of course, breakthroughs like this wouldn't be possible without gifts in Wills.

Sue's story

Sue has been successfully treated for ovarian cancer twice. After testing positive for a BRCA gene fault, she also took part in an olaparib and cediranib drug trial, supported by CRUK.

"CRUK has been instrumental in my own and many thousands of other patients' journeys," she says. "I am endlessly thankful for its contribution to the development of so many new treatments."

There is the possibility that Sue's children may inherit the faulty gene that caused her cancer, and this prompted her to leave a gift in her Will to CRUK. "A cancer-free vision for my children is a very worthy investment. My legacy donation means I'll still be there for them, even when I'm not."

[1]Ahmad AS et al. *British Journal of Cancer*, 2015

Pledge for the future

CRUK couldn't have come this far without gifts in Wills, as they fund a third of the charity's life-saving work.

A gift of £350 buys special antibodies that light up tiny parts of cancer cells, helping to shed light on new ways to beat cancer, while £2,600 could fund a CRUK research nurse for one month, and £6,000 could fund a whole research group for a day at The Cambridge Institute.

Today, 2 in 4 people survive their cancer for at least 10 years, but Cancer Research UK wants to accelerate this progress so 3 in 4 survive it by 2034. Gifts in Wills support the research that will help beat cancer for future generations.

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To find out more about the power of leaving a gift in your Will, visit cruk.org/legacy

Cancer Research UK is a registered charity in England and Wales (1089464), Scotland (SC041666), the Isle of Man (1103) and Jersey (247).

CANCER RESEARCH UK

GARDENING TALENT

DAVID PEARCE

As gardener at Cotswold hotel Whatley Manor, David must combine heritage with a forward-thinking approach

PORTRAIT JASON INGRAM

Earliest gardening memory Taking it upon myself to propagate *Carex pendula,* the pendulous sedge, around the family garden. It's a fairly pernicious weed but was none-the-less a clear favourite of my four-year-old self, with its architectural seedheads, glossy evergreen foliage, and child-appealing scale.

Is gardening a career change? I am not a career changer, as such. However, I feel so little is done in schools to promote careers in horticulture that to make it your career you're almost expected to have an epiphanic moment – which I had to reach mostly by myself, but still with more assistance than most.

Most valuable training The Diploma at RHS Garden, Wisley provided me with a good knowledge of individual plants. Some related travel, which allowed me to observe how those same plants interact with their environment, focused my cultivation knowledge. That in combination with greater ecological understanding has helped me apply plants more successfully in the wider garden collective.

How do you remind yourself what needs doing next I use several notepads. While I break down maintenance aspects into weekly and monthly jobs, all the development and planting alterations are written in an annual notepad, so I remember what needs doing when it's no longer obvious.

Biggest challenge facing gardeners In a changing climate, we can ultimately change the plants we grow. However, foreign pests and diseases are difficult to adapt to. It is becoming increasingly important to cultivate plants in diverse garden ecosystems, similar to how they have grown for millennia.

How to garden more sustainably While growing vegetables, annuals and biennials from seed is common practice, growing trees and herbaceous perennials from seed is still quite shied away from. Some very easy perennials that can be grown quickly from seed are giant scabious (*Cephalaria gigantea*), milky bellflower (*Campanula lactiflora* 'Prichard's Variety') and cupid's dart (*Catananche caerula*).

In what direction do you see horticulture heading? Applied horticulture is finally (and scientifically) starting to be recognised for its ecological and environmental benefits. Horticulture will (hopefully) lead to everyday gardens becoming one giant, beautifully diverse and connected nature reserve that spreads across the country; an ecological mosaic.

Contact david@whatleymanor.com, @davidrobertpearce, whatleymanor.com, @whatleymanor

It is increasingly important to cultivate plants in diverse garden ecosytems, similar to how they have grown for millennia

THE CONSTANT GARDENER

Summer's heat may be gone, but the soil is still warm making now the ideal time to establish herbaceous perennials and biennials before winter

WORDS BENJAMIN POPE ILLUSTRATION CLAIRE HARRUP

September can be a magical month for the gardener. The weather in the UK can still be hot, although the sun's intensity has gone, making things feel just that little more relaxed. After a busy spring and summer, I relish this slower pace, where rose flowers are left to form hip, and drying seedheads of angelica, monarda and veronicastrum mature to create interesting structure for the months to come.

For now, I don't mind the borders looking a little chaotic and loose, as long as they hold some warm, rich colours that reflect the approach to autumn. Brassy yellow *Helenium* 'El Dorado' shouts loudly from the borders, while *Crocosmia* 'Miss Scarlet' and *Bistorta amplexicaulis* 'Fat Domino' are ablaze with rich scarlet flowers. A recent favourite and arrival to the garden is *Heliopsis helianthoides* var. *scabra* 'Bleeding Hearts'. Available as seed and flowering in its first year, the burning orange flowers contrast with burgundy tarnished foliage and stems. In the cutting beds dahlias bounce around in almost every colour, working beautifully in a vase or container display with neighbouring *Coreopsis tinctoria* 'Roulette' and *Panicum miliaceum* 'Violaceum'.

To regain some sense of order I like to ensure that all the hedges and topiary are clipped. The growth of beech, hornbeam, hawthorn and yew have all slowed down, meaning this 'haircut' should keep them looking tidy until spring. For box I like to trim earlier in summer, avoiding cooler conditions and the heavy morning dew that encourages activity from resting blight spores.

If you're looking to plant new features, I would advise on avoiding box. While there is no exact replacement for this classic garden staple, interesting options can be found using dwarf forms of euonymus and pittosporum, along with *Veronica pinguifolia* 'Sutherlandii', *Lonicera ligustrina* var. *pileata* and *Osmanthus delavayi*.

I've recently planted the tiny leaved pittosporums *P. tenuifolium* 'Oliver Twist' and *P. tenuifolium* 'Silver Sheen' – if clipped these should provide a crisp form, though if left loose they will be a supply of greenery for flower arrangements. As the saying goes, 'necessity is the mother of invention' and being forced to think outside the box can be instrumental in a gardener's creative journey.

What to sow and plant

Soil temperatures and weather conditions are still warm, so now is a good time to make improvements for next year and plant additions to borders, providing there is space. I prefer to plant trees and shrubs in autumn or winter, but planting herbaceous perennials and biennials now will also ensure they establish before winter.

I also begin bulb planting, focussing on early flowering species such as crocus, hyacinths and scillas, along with the first narcissi that put down their roots in autumn. A September planting is also good for woodland bulbs such as erythroniums and trilliums, along with the charming *Fritillaria meleagris*, all of which dislike being out of the soil where they tend to dry out. Either plant in position or in pots and store outside, planting out when in growth early next spring.

The days are shortening but there is still time to promptly sow hardy greens and salad leaves along with fast-maturing radish. Hardy annuals including cerinthe, cornflowers and poppies can be sown now, though I wait a little longer so that plants don't grow too large before winter and become more susceptible to frost damage.

What to harvest and pick

As the year reaches its harvesting zenith, there is much still to enjoy. French and runner beans have taken over from broad beans and peas, while celeriac, pak choi and tomatoes are swelling and ripe for harvest. Melons and grapes smell sweet in the greenhouse and the potato patch is sown with a protective green manure after lifting and storing the last of the maincrops. September is about taking stock and something I love to make is home-made ketchup. Combining gluts of tomatoes, celery and parsley with spices, vinegar and sugar will give you a flavoursome sauce that rises well above the usual condiment.

From the cutting beds I like to pick vibrant colours found in asters, kniphofias and zinnias, clashing hot pinks with vibrant reds and yellows, together with the warm amber tones of *Amaranthus* 'Autumn Palette' and *Rudbeckia hirta* 'Sahara'. To capture the season, cut a few seedheads from your ornamental grasses, with calamagrostis, miscanthus or setaria among my preferred choices. □

• Benjamin's *Gardens Illustrated* Masterclass: Grow a year-round, productive garden is available at gardensillustrated.com

GARDEN JOBS for September

Cut hedges and topiary Trim hedges and topiary using shears and hedge trimmers to encourage a dense habit and produce a crisp tidy finish that will look good all winter. Regularly clean the blades and sharpen occasionally to ensure a clean cut.

Expand your fruit collection Plan what fruit you would like to order for autumn and winter delivery and planting, taking advantage of the bareroot season. Many nurseries and growers will hold tastings now where you can sample fruits before you order.

Collect seed As the seeds of annual, biennials and perennials ripen and dry, collect and clean them by sieving and winnowing, before labelling and storing them somewhere cool for sowing next year.

Cut meadows Trim rough grass and meadow areas, leaving the material to dry and drop seed for a week or so, before raking and removing the debris to reduce soil fertility and promote conditions for wild flowers to establish.

Turf maintenance Complete any maintenance to your lawn, including scarifying, hollow tining and reseeding where necessary, so that the grass can recover before winter arrives and so grow better next year.

Changing rooms

Although she readily admits to making a few early mistakes, Antonia Davies has created an assured set of ever-evolving garden rooms around her Cotswold home

WORDS LIA LEENDERTZ PHOTOGRAPHS ÉVA NÉMETH

IN BRIEF

Name Admington Hall.
What A garden of rooms surrounding a part Jacobean, part Georgian country house.
Where Warwickshire.
Soil Warwickshire clay and a high water table.
Size Five acres of intensively managed garden in ten acres of grounds.
Climate Strong southwesterly prevailing winds, cold in winter, but with some shelter.
Hardiness zone USDA 8.

Facing page The Gravel Garden's meandering path forces visitors (and chickens) to slow down and pick their way through islands of airy plantings that include *Stipa lessingiana*, *Oenothera lindheimeri* 'Rosy Jane' and *Euphorbia palustris* punctuated by box and laurel shapes.

This image A combination of late-season flowers, including *Sanguisorba* 'Purple Tails', *Aster* x *frikartii* 'Mönch', *Eutrochium maculatum* 'Purple Bush', *Dahlia* 'Totally Tangerine', *Echinacea pallida* and *Salvia* 'Amistad', bring a rich mix of colour to the main border in the Walled Garden.

If any one aspect of Antonia Davies' garden were to sum up her gardening approach, it would be her borders. Wide and generous, they tower and bulge with plants, overlapping and complementing each other, cheek by jowl, deeply unrestrained. "I have made lots of mistakes," she admits cheerfully, "and you can tell straight away that this isn't the garden of a professional. Nothing was really planned, though there are themes to each area and border, but I love to try out plant combinations and see if they work."

The main border in her Walled Garden is a wonderful example of this, packed with asters, heleniums, lobelias, echinaceas, thalictrums, sanguisorbas, roses and a variety of salvias, all tripping over each other. "We spend a good portion of each year trying to undo my mistakes from previous years, moving plants that aren't in the right place and finding new homes for them."

Early on, Antonia had help and advice from garden designer Mary Keen. "The previous owners had a love affair with leylandiis. It was understandable as we have a strong prevailing wind here, so Mary helped me create a shelter belt of oaks, beech, chestnut and hawthorns, which would help give the garden shelter." But having arrived with four young children, the youngest six weeks old, Antonia put her garden dreams on hold, only beginning again around ten years ago.

Antonia's inspiration is unusual. Her parents Jeremy and Biddy Chittenden lived at Lytes Cary, a National Trust house in Somerset, creating the garden there and putting it on the map. "It was the garden I spent my childhood in, playing hide and seek among the topiary and the borders. I always wanted to recreate something of that here."

But Lytes Cary – a roughly rectangular house built symmetrically around a courtyard, which lent itself to a series of parallel garden rooms – is a very different beast to Admington Hall. The back part of Admington Hall was built in 1590 by the Earl of Warwick and used as a hunting lodge. It is all inglenook fireplaces, beamed ceilings and the odd ghost. In 1808 a Georgian façade was added to the back of the house giving it a completely different feel. These additions mean the house is set at a number of angles, plus there is a stream that encircles the house, all of which made it difficult for Antonia to plot a series of evenly sized garden rooms.

Not that she particularly tried or minded. "Nothing is symmetrical in this garden, everything is slightly out of sync," she says. "So

To continue turn to page 38 ▷

Above The main door into the Walled Garden used to open on to a fruit cage, which Antonia has now replaced with a vibrant and colourful border containing *Aster* x *frikartii* 'Mönch' and *Salvia* 'Amistad', which is one of Antonia's favourite autumn plants. "Such a wonderfully courageous plant. It repeat flowers right up until the hardest of frosts."

Right Antonia's pelargonium collection is displayed on plant stands through the summer. Antonia also keeps any of the plants she takes out of the borders on plant stands around the Walled Garden. "I am a terrible hoarder, I can't throw anything away. I'm always sure I'll find a place for them one day but it inevitably causes irritation with my gallant team who are forever trying to persuade me to edit down."

Passion for pelargoniums

Admington Hall is ten minutes away from Fibrex Nurseries, home to one of the largest National Collections of pelargoniums. “All my green-fingered friends who come to stay here want to visit Fibrex,” says Antonia, “and of course I can never come home empty handed.” As a result she has built up a collection of flowering and scented-leaved pelargoniums that are displayed on the plant stands all summer and then put away in the greenhouse for winter. Here they are given a little heat but only if prolonged cold weather threatens. “They fare surprisingly well in quite cool temperatures.”

As well as being the time to move them indoors, September is the time to take cuttings. “We keep large mother plants for propagation and continue to take cuttings all through the winter months. I enjoy nursing the babies through the winter and watching them come to life in the spring.”

Once they have taken all the cuttings they cut back the mother plants and store them in an unheated greenhouse with minimal watering and zero food throughout the winter months. The cuttings are grown in Sinclair Modular Seed Compost and, once rooted, get transferred into 9cm pots into a mix of SylvaGrow (peat free), John Innes No.2 and perlite to help drainage. They get a small helping of Osmocote at the end of March when they show signs of shooting and then MiracleGro once a week thereafter.

8 KEY PLANTS

1 *Echinacea* 'Magnus' A reliable flower that blooms from July to the end of September. Antonia uses it with *Knautia macedonica*, *Pennisetum thunbergii* 'Red Buttons', brightly coloured cosmos and *Eupatorium maculatum* 'Purple Bush'. 75cm x 45cm. RHS H5, USDA 3a-8b†.

2 *Rosa* 'Pink Perpétué' A climbing rose that, as its name suggests, goes on and on flowering. Disease-resistant with glossy foliage, its one drawback for Antonia is its lack of scent. 3.6m x 2.4m. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

3 *Linaria* 'Peachy' A toadflax that starts pink and ages to a peachy yellow. "It has a lovely ethereal feel, but real wow factor," says Antonia. 1m x 40cm. RHS H6.

4 *Eryngium bourgatii* Adds interest from spring to late autumn, starting off in a silvery form with blue, spiky, star-like flowers, turning soft brown while still keeping its architectural shape in winter. 45cm x 30cm. RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

5 *Rosa* 'Sally Holmes' An easy and disease-resistant, repeat-flowering rose Antonia discovered through her friend Angel Collins. She uses it in a pale, pastelly border alongside bronze fennel, veronicastrums, campanulas, stipas and *Anthriscus sylvestris* 'Ravenswing'. 1.2m x 60cm. AGM*. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

6 *Aster* x *frikartii* 'Mönch' Antonia calls this "a real autumn stalwart" and has used it a lot, finding it easy, colourful and super reliable. "Bees and butterflies love it too," she says. 70cm x 40cm. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 5a-10b.

7 *Cosmos bipinnatus* 'Pink Popsocks' A delicate, relatively short cosmos with effervescent green foliage that Antonia grows each year from seed. A great filler that carries on flowering into autumn. 60cm x 45cm. RHS H3.

8 *Dahlia* 'Labyrinth' A dahlia with a huge flower that looks wonderful picked and used singly in a bud vase, while holding its own in a border. "I love the madness of it," says Antonia. 90cm x 75cm. RHS H3, USDA 7a-10b.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
†Hardiness ratings given where available.

Antonia's parents, Jeremy and Biddy Chittenden, lived at Lytes Cary, the National Trust house in Somerset, creating the garden there and putting it on the map

Against the outside of the Walled Garden Antonia has planted a series of pleached *Malus* 'Evereste' supported by a bold block of *Molinia caerulea* 'Heidebraut', to which she has since added *Oenothera lindheimeri* 'Whirling Butterflies' to pop up randomly through the grasses.

▷ everything just sort of evolved, with nature lending a helping hand in deciding what goes where. I would have a light-bulb moment in the middle of the night – I have to have a hedge there – and I would then become obsessed with the idea of this hedge until we put it in place. And as a result it has slowly evolved but I never really thought of the bigger picture."

This led to some planting that she has come to regret. "Mary Keen and I came up with the plan for an avenue of *Cornus alternifolia* 'Argentea'. Later I planted a yew hedge alongside the *Cornus* but I planted it too close and it made the trees lean out to reach the light." However, this has since been corrected with persuasive staking, and now that the trees are large enough to reach beyond the hedge, their pale leaves look wonderful against the dark yew hedge.

After years of experimenting Antonia is satisfied with the skeleton of the garden, which leads visitors around the exterior of the house through a series of rooms, archways and walkways, with surprises around every corner. "I never want to be able to see too much," she says. "I want you to have to walk around a corner or go through an arch to see what's next." Two full-time and two part-time gardeners help maintain the garden and Antonia spends as much time working alongside them as she can. September is an important month here, as the garden picks up after summer. "May and June is good but then there is a bit of a lull with the roses mostly over and lots of seedheads. But I am pleased by how much is in flower in September, and the garden will keep on flowering well into October."

Her unconventional approach has meant the garden has taken a while to find itself, but it also feels organic and connected with both the house and its surroundings, and very much the product of Antonia's memories and imagination. It is a garden inspired by family and with its roots in a magical childhood garden, and Antonia has had time to develop as a gardener as it has evolved. "Some people say they have a novel in them," she says. "I had a garden in me. It was something I always wanted to do and I'm so grateful to have had the opportunity to do it here." ❑

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Admington Hall, Admington, Shipston-on-Stour, Warwickshire CV36 4JN. **Tel** 01789 450279. **Open** By appointment for groups of 20 to 99, between May and September. Email adhall@admingtonhall.com for details. Admission £7.50.

Above The Topiary Garden, protected from the prevailing winds by a belt of mature trees, is a homage to her childhood garden at Lytes Cary. In between the ornate buttresses of yew sit a large pots with *Hydrangea arborescens* 'Annabelle'.

Right Inspired by a similar avenue at Rockcliffe, a beautiful garden in the Cotswolds not far from Admington Hall, this avenue of *Cornus alternifolia* 'Argentea' forms what Antonia likes to call her 'sundowner spot', as the terrace by the house offers a glorious view of the setting sun. This avenue of wedding cake trees leads on to a further avenue of tulip trees, *Liriodendron tulipifera*, and the sun sets down the centre of the entire avenue. The bridge crosses a stream that circles the property.

Nothing is symmetrical in this garden, everything is slightly out of sync. It just sort of evolved, with nature lending a helping hand in deciding what goes where

Reduce, reuse, recycle

With its careful mix of perennials and grasses, Marian Boswall's garden at Tillingham Winery reaches its peak in late summer and early autumn

WORDS STEPHANIE DONALDSON PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM

IN BRIEF

Name Tillingham Winery.
What Minimal maintenance, gravel garden in a former farmyard.
Where East Sussex.
Size Approximately half an acre.
Soil Heavily compacted Wealden clay.
Climate Dry summers, and wet and windy winters.
Hardiness zone USDA 8.

Left *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *deamii* weaves through *Molinia caerulea* subsp. *arundinacea* 'Transparent' to bring a burst of colour to the autumn garden, while *Liatris spicata* seedheads add contrasting texture. Alongside the oast house, rustic post and rail fencing separates this area from fields where animals graze.

This image Planting on the terrace was designed by Marian to blend harmoniously with the native plants growing on the far side of the fence that margins the vineyard; *Verbena rigida* and *Verbena hastata* bring vivid colour while *Pennisetum alopecuroides* 'Hameln' adds movement.

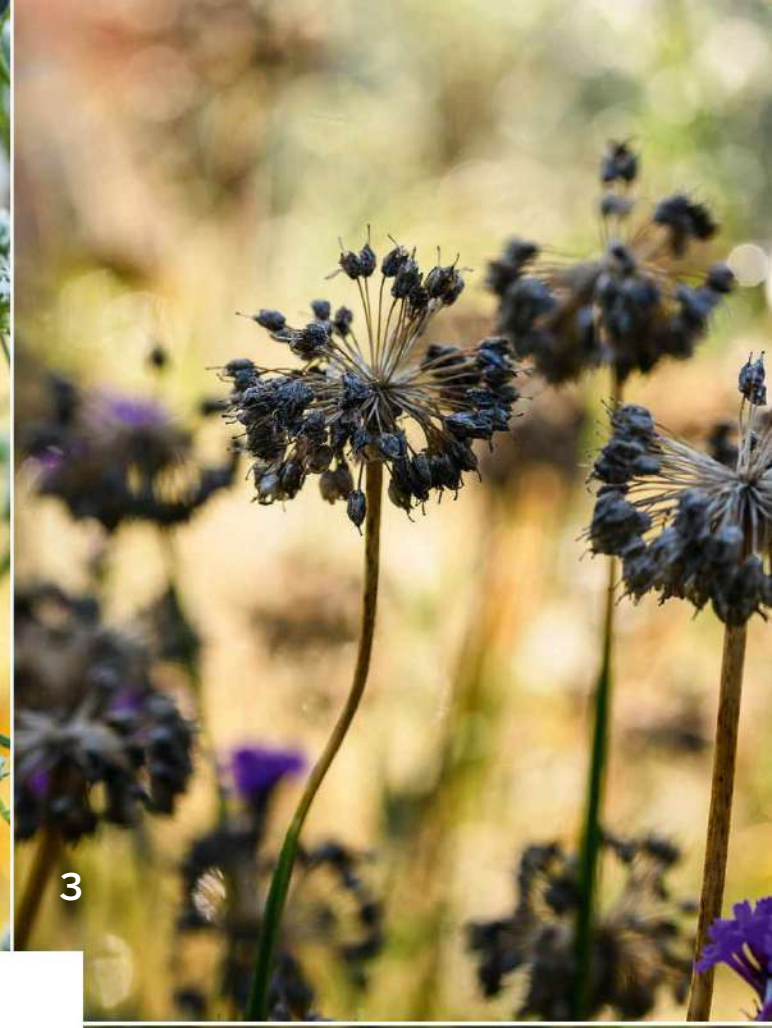
The Sussex Weald is a timeless undulating landscape with hidden corners where narrow roads overhung with trees wind through ancient woodland. Tucked away in one of these corners and reached via the evocatively named Starvecrow Lane, Tillingham Winery is a biodynamically managed vineyard and winery with a restaurant and rooms incorporated into the old and new farmyard buildings. A grid pattern of gravel beds echoes the surrounding vineyard and features naturalistic planting of perennials and grasses that soften the uncompromisingly agricultural appearance of the farmyard.

Ben Walgate, the man behind this enterprise, moved to Tillingham as its tenant in 2019 and set about establishing the vineyard with the backing of his landlords. He had grown up in farming but instead of returning home after university he travelled round the Mediterranean and found himself taking a detour into winemaking. He was much inspired by the sensitivity to nature that was practised in the organic vineyards of Europe and when his father moved the family farm in Lincolnshire over to a regenerative management system, Ben was keen to do something similar at Tillingham. Regenerative farming involves moving away from artificial fertilisers, minimising soil disturbance, increasing crop diversity and keeping living roots in the ground as much as possible. Biodynamic principles are followed to make natural wines free of any additives.

"I don't want the farm to be either manicured or neglected, but balanced and healthy," he explains. "The farm's biodiversity and soil health won't be restored in a day – that's a long-term thing – but we are making a start." As part of this holistic approach Ben asked local landscape architect and garden designer, Marian Boswall, to work with the architects who were converting the buildings and make a garden that was sympathetic to the Tillingham ethos. A champion of sustainable and regenerative gardening, Marian was a perfect choice. "I became involved before Tillingham opened," says Marian. "It was a nice challenge – there was a very low budget and the brief was for it to be very low to no maintenance and for the planting to be as naturalistic as possible." She was also asked to create the paths and planting that lead visitors from the car park to the farmyard as well as a terrace that overlooks the vineyards with views to the historic town of Rye.

Originally, the plan had been for the Dutch barn to be demolished, but Marian championed its retention as a focal point in the farmyard, around which she designed the surrounding planting. The barn has now become an iconic element at Tillingham and has recently had ▷

Above A grid of naturalistic, pollinator-friendly planting, dominated by the airy grass *Molinia caerulea* subsp. *arundinacea* 'Transparent' with repeated plantings of *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *deamii* and *Eryngium yuccifolium* helps to soften the uncompromising agricultural appearance of the Dutch barn, and encloses the dining area beneath its now-replaced roof.



8 KEY PLANTS

1 ***Echinacea pallida*** Offers pink flowers from July to September. Although it has struggled to establish here in the heavy clay soil it makes an impact even in its senescence. 1.25m x 50cm. RHS H5, USDA 3a-10b†.

2 ***Eryngium yuccifolium*** A clump-forming evergreen perennial with sword-like leaves and very tall, branched flowering stems carrying clusters of cone-like flowers. 2.5m x 1.5m. RHS H4, USDA 3a-8b.

3 ***Allium*** **'Summer Beauty'** A bulbous perennial with strap-like leaves that bears rounded heads of lilac flowers that persist to form attractive seedheads. 50cm x 25cm. RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.

4 ***Liatris spicata*** Upright bottle-brush flower spikes in shades of purplish-pink that open from the top down in late summer and autumn, leaving useful seedheads. 50cm-1m x 50cm. RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

5 ***Pennisetum alopecuroides*** **'Hameln'** A compact perennial grass that forms a low mound and produces long-lasting, brush-like flowers in late summer. 1.2m x 1m. AGM*. RHS H3, USDA 5a-9b.

6 ***Rudbeckia fulgida*** **var.** ***deamii*** An upright clump-forming perennial with bright yellow, daisy-like flowers from late summer to mid autumn. 60cm x 45cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 3a-9b.

7 ***Sporobolus heterolepis*** This perennial grass throws up airy sprays of dainty flowers in late summer and early autumn, just as its dense clumps of mid-green leaves turn yellow and orange, and then pale brown. 50cm-1m x 50cm-1m. RHS H7, USDA 3a-9b.

8 ***Verbena rigida*** Grows well in dry situations and its vivid purple flowers make it a good alternative to *Verbena bonariensis* in windy positions. Can be grown as an annual in colder regions. 60cm x 40cm. RHS H3.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
†Hardiness ratings given where available.

Marian was guided by the flora and fauna of the Weald when choosing the plants, and mainly chose near-natives that would work harmoniously with the surrounding farm and countryside

its roof replaced with something less rustic but more weatherproof – which must add to the comfort of the diners below.

Marian had no desire to prettify the farmyard. "I love the wide, tamped-concrete paths, it feels as if a tractor might come down any moment." Paying tribute to its past, cobbles were incorporated at places where there would have been heavy wear, and bits of railway track recall that farm equipment often ran on tramlines. Wherever possible things were repurposed or reused. Old galvanised tanks and feed wagons are used as planters, as are large concrete rings that were left over from a drainage project on the farm.

Marian was guided by the flora and fauna of the Weald when choosing the plants, and mainly chose near-natives that would work harmoniously with the surrounding farm and countryside. "There was no budget for anything like soil, and planting into the heavily compacted Wealden clay was impossible. All we could do was bring in local shingle and spread it to a depth of 20cm on top of the clay. The plants came either unpotted or in 9cm pots and we put them straight into the shingle – which was no easy task– so that the base of the rootballs nearly touched the heavy clay soil. This allowed them to send roots down, but avoids problems with 'wet feet' when the clay becomes waterlogged. All the planting was done during a period of wet weather that helped them to establish and, other than the trees, they have not been watered since. Three years on, the majority of the original plants have established well and are spreading happily. *Verbena rigida* creates waves of purple among a sea of grasses including *Sporobolus heterolepis*, which is used in all areas, while *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *deamii* and *Kniphofia* 'Bees Lemon' add yellows to the palette.

"It is definitely a garden that is at its peak in summer and early autumn," says Marian. "But because the plants are grown hard they stand well and overwinter in beautiful shades and textures of brown until spring when they are cut right back."

Asked if she is happy with the way the garden has evolved, Marian regards Tillingham holistically rather than simply as a garden design project. "It's wonderful that it's a space that is really alive," she says. "The usual fate of redundant farm buildings is to become office units, or be used for light industry, but at Tillingham Ben has adopted the healing ethos. People are invited to come and eat local food and drink natural wines, to stay in lovely countryside, participate in courses and use it as a community space. Above all, it is a place that works for both the people and the wildlife." ❑

USEFUL INFORMATION
Address Dew Farm, Dew Lane, Peasmarsh, Rye, East Sussex TN31 6XD. **Tel** 01797 208226.
Web tillingham.com **Open** See website for details.

Left No attempt has been made to disguise the agricultural nature of the farmyard with its wide tamped concrete paths, which are softened by pollinator-friendly perennials in shingle beds. Surplus concrete drainage pipes are used as large-scale planters for variegated *Phormium tenax* 'Variegatum'.

Above The rust-red Dutch Barn, where daytime meals and drinks are served, has become an iconic feature of Tillingham; the building has great character but its roof had a limited life and has recently been replaced with something weatherproof that retains the original profile.

Mature outlook

Cottesbrooke's head gardener Jenny Barnes combines well-established plants with bold foliage and rich colours to create three container displays to help summer slide into autumn

WORDS **JENNY BARNES** PHOTOGRAPHS **RICHARD BLOOM**

LATE SUMMER WARMTH

At Cottesbrooke, we don't use many red and orange plants in the garden, as they can be difficult to incorporate with the softer pastel shades that seem to dominate our borders. There are, however, a few plants that we've fallen in love with over the years and just had to have. As long as there is a unifying theme, in this case, the warm, autumnal colour palette, then grouping together a collection of pots is a great way of displaying a number of individual plants.

How to achieve the look

Container and composition

To emphasise the autumnal feeling I've used only terracotta pots. That way I can use a selection of shapes and sizes and still create a cohesive overall aesthetic. The banana, *Ensete ventricosum* 'Maurelii', is several years old and so the pot had to be large enough to accommodate a substantial rootball, but I was able to squeeze some of the other plants into much smaller pots. Any collection of pots can be used, if there is at least one element that links them together: colour, size, material etc. Here the warm colours of the plants are picked up in the terracotta, but you could achieve a similar cohesive effect using white-flowering plants, complemented by silver-grey foliage in galvanised planters.

Cultivation and care

Plant dahlias in spring, 10cm deep. Once flower buds develop, feed once a week with a multi-purpose feed. Ensure you keep pots watered well throughout the summer. Larger plants, such as dahlias, may need additional support; secure stems with twine to garden canes pushed into the compost around the edges of the pots. To extend flowering, continuously deadhead blooms. After the first frosts, cut back the blackened foliage of the dahlias to a few centimetres above ground. Move the dahlias and banana pots into the greenhouse and keep dry until all risk of frost has passed. The grasses will all stand through the winter, offering another season of interest. Shear over the pots in the spring before any new growth appears.

Plants

1 *Molinia caerulea* subsp. *arundinacea* 'Transparent' Deciduous grass with purple feathery seedheads. 2m x 80cm. AGM*. RHS H7, USDA 5a-8b†.
2 *Molinia caerulea* 'Heidezwerg' Neat clumps of bright-green foliage. 1.2m x 60cm. RHS H7.
3 *Ensete ventricosum* 'Maurelii' Tender, evergreen perennial with huge, dark-red foliage. Rarely flowers in the UK. 4m x 4m. AGM. RHS H2, USDA 10a-11.
4 *Dahlia* 'Chat Noir' Small-flowered dahlia with rich-red flowers. 90cm x 75cm. AGM. RHS H3.
5 *Cestrum elegans* Evergreen shrub with clusters of vivid-red flowers. 3m x 3m. RHS H3, USDA 8a-11.
6 *Dahlia* 'Sam Hopkins' Large, dark-red flowers and mid-green foliage. 1m x 1m. RHS H3.
7 *Dahlia* 'Totally Tangerine' Anemone-type dahlia with rusty-orange centre. 1m x 1m. RHS H3.
8 *Dahlia* 'Dark Spirit' Profusion of small, dark, pompom flowers. 45cm x 90cm. RHS H3.
9 *Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster' Clump-forming grass. 1m x 1.5m. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society †Hardiness ratings given where available.

VERDANT SHADES

My local nursery has a fantastic collection of shade plants, and when I visited in early September, I was struck by how healthy and lush these plants looked. This is in complete contrast to both the garden and the wider landscape, which, as we enter the autumn are dominated by warm, rusty, autumnal hues. Cornfields are golden and the trees are beginning to turn. I wanted to create a container that used these fresh verdant greens, to add a bit of energy to a shady corner.

How to achieve the look

Container and composition

The plants that I have chosen, such as the *Liriope* and *Pachysandra*, are relatively small, and I wanted a container that was appropriate in size. I chose this aged, wooden wine box, which is deep enough to accommodate the rootballs of several plants, but small enough that it doesn't dominate the arrangement. Most of these shade plants would grow happily in a woodland environment and by choosing this wooden box, the natural, rustic aesthetic is continued. This planting could be replicated in a longer container, such as a window box. You could add additional foliage interest by including plants such as *Euphorbia amygdaloides* var. *robbiae*, pulmonarias or heucheras.

Cultivation and care

To protect the wooden box from the damp compost, I lined the inside using an old compost bag and used crocks to create a good layer of drainage in the base. Because these plants thrive in woodland conditions, I added a huge handful of leaf mould to a multi-purpose compost, which helps to open up the soil structure, improving drainage while retaining moisture. Arrange the plants within the box, and firm the compost down around them. Keep the soil moist, but not wet, while the plants are growing. In winter, all the plants can be cut down, leaving just a few centimetres above the surface. A mulch of bark chippings helps lock in moisture and these can be topped up in the winter to add a layer of protection.

Plants

1 *Tricyrtis formosana* A vigorous, rhizomatous perennial bearing many mottled-purple flowers through summer. Ideal for woodland conditions. 50cm x 1m. RHS H5, USDA 4a-9b.

2 *Pachysandra terminalis* 'Green Carpet' Evergreen groundcover, with leathery leaves and spikes of cream flowers in summer. Copes well under trees. 1m x 1.5m. RHS H5, USDA 5a-9b.

3 *Dryopteris dilatata* 'Crispa Whiteside' Partially evergreen fern with triangular fronds. Segments are toothed and crinkled. 1.5m x 1m. AGM. RHS H6.

4 *Zantedeschia aethiopica* 'Glencoe' Very floriferous. Pointed, arrow-shaped foliage with large white trumpet flowers. Prefers moist soil. 1m x 1m. RHS H4, USDA 8a-10b.

5 *Blechnum penna-marina* Evergreen, mat-forming fern with dark-green fronds. 50cm x 1m. RHS H4.

6 *Liriope muscari* 'Super Blue' Narrow, bright-green, strappy leaves with spikes of violet flowers. Copes in dry shade. 30cm x 30cm. USDA 5a-10b.

Plant suppliers

- Avondale Nursery
  Tel 07367 590620,
  avondalenursery.co.uk

- Beth Chatto's
  Plants & Gardens
  Tel 01206 822007,
  bethchatto.co.uk

- Sarah Raven
  Tel 0345 092 0283,
  sarahraven.com

SHADES OF GREY

This large, galvanised container sits in the corner of our potting shed and usually holds a collection of canes and poles. In its heyday, it was used as a bowser for carting water around the garden and would have had large wheels on either side. I was keen to use an established *Acacia baileyana* in the planting somehow, and this was the only container large enough to house the giant rootball of a small tree. The silver-grey foliage is offset perfectly by the steely grey of the bowser.

How to achieve the look

Container and composition

The aged, galvanised bowser acts as a fantastic, practical container for larger plants. Its curved shape is particularly eye catching. It's incredibly deep, which provides lots of space for rootballs and allows room for underplanting. I wanted to focus on colours and textures in this arrangement and keep the planting relatively simple. I placed the tree in the centre of the pot and arranged the gladioli and the lavender around the base. Because the container is round and the planting has no front or back, it would be a great option for a site where it can be viewed from all sides. If the container is to be viewed from one side only, push the tree towards the back of the pot and focus the underplanting towards the front.

Cultivation and care

Maintenance on this container is minimal, but it is vital that the tree is kept well watered during any dry periods. I wanted the lavender to cascade over the sides of the container to keep the look soft and so made sure to plant close to the edges of the bowser. It is a large plant in a relatively small space and will dry out quickly. When planting, I used John Innes No.3, which has been specifically developed for mature and established plants, and offers a nutrient-rich, stable medium that is great for growing containerised trees. Feed with a general multi-purpose plant feed once a week. You could also use a feed of organic nettle tea to promote foliage growth.

Plants

1 *Gladiolus murielae* Elegant, cormous perennial with strappy leaves. Fragrant white flowers with a burgundy blotch at the end of summer. 10cm x 1m. AGM. RHS H3.

2 *Lavandula latifolia* A broadleaf, aromatic, evergreen shrub. Small, pale flower spikes in summer. 40cm x 40cm. RHS H7, USDA 6a-9b.

3 *Acacia baileyana* 'Purpurea' Evergreen tree with small, feathery, grey-green foliage. New growth is plum coloured. 8m x 6m. AGM. RHS H3.

HESPERANTHA

These elegant plants from southern Africa are highly adaptable in UK gardens, offering months of colour and bringing a touch of the exotic to borders

WORDS JOHN GRIMSHAW

***Hesperantha coccinea* 'Elburton Glow'**
With its rich salmon-pink flowers and upright habit this is a valuable cultivar that quickly bulks up to form a wide mat, offering impressive clumps of flowers from September onwards. 50cm x 30cm. RHS H4, USDA 7a-9b†.

MAAYKE DE RIDDER

PLANT PROFILE

What Genus of around 91 species of cormous plants in the iris (Iridaceae) family. Most are found almost entirely in South Africa, with just four species found outside southern African. *H. coccinea* is the most commonly grown and familiar under its old name of *Schizostylis*.
Origins Southern and central Africa.
Season Spring for winter-growing Western Cape species; summer/autumn for *Hesperantha coccinea* and other Eastern Cape species.
Size 45-80cm tall, spreading to 50-60cm in a few years in good soil.
Conditions Prefer moist, fertile soil in full sun. Some shelter can prevent them being rocked over in strong winds.
Hardiness Most have an RHS hardiness rating of H4, but may prove more hardy in sheltered sites, and are suitable for gardens in USDA zones 7a to 9b.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
†Hardiness ratings given where available.

***Hesperantha coccinea* 'Alba'**
A number of white clones of *Hesperantha coccinea* are in cultivation, varying in the size and shape of the flowers: this one has very pointed segments. Looks wonderful when planted in large drifts in the garden. 50cm x 40cm. RHS H4, USDA 7a-9b.

RACHEL WARNE

***Hesperantha coccinea* 'Major'**
The best red-flowered cultivar – perhaps the best of all – but there is some variation in its stocks. The 6cm rounded flowers of rich, almost coppery red, have a beautiful sheen that catches the sun. 50cm x 30cm. AGM*. RHS H4, USDA 7a-9b.

JASON INGRAM

***Hesperantha coccinea* 'Cindy Towe'**
A deep-red cultivar with pointed segments, starting to flower in July or August. It was selected from a seedling in the garden of June Towe in Herefordshire, and named after her dog. 60cm x 45cm. RHS H4, USDA 7a-9b.

***Hesperantha coccinea* 'Rosea'**
Pink-flowered forms of *Hesperantha coccinea* are common in South Africa, but are often quite pallid. This cultivar, however, is more richly coloured, and is said to be free-flowering. 50cm x 30cm. RHS H4, USDA 7a-9b.

More than 30 years ago I was high in the alpine zone of Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, when I came across a tiny, pink-flowered bulb, standing just a few centimetres above the dry soil. It was *Hesperantha petitiana*, the northernmost representative of a genus of more than 80 species, the majority of which are endemic to the winter-rainfall areas of southern Africa's Western Cape, where the commoner species can sometimes be found in enormous numbers.

Often inconspicuous during the day, hesperanthas open in the afternoon or evening – a habit that suggested their name, which means 'evening flower.' Although the Western Cape species have been cultivated on and off for the past 200 years, they are very seldom seen outside specialist collections, a shame as many are beauties, including the yellow and chocolate *H. vaginata*, the pink *H. pauciflora* and *H. cucullata* with pink-backed flowers that open white in late afternoon. A few tens of thousands of them shimmering among the annuals and other little bulbs in southern Africa's Namaqualand is a wonderful sight.

For the majority of gardeners, however, *Hesperantha* means just one species, the large and splendid *H. coccinea*, which is something of an anomaly in the genus and indeed was long-placed as the single species of the genus *Schizostylis*. It comes from another centre of diversity in the genus, the Drakensberg range of eastern South Africa, where about 14 species occur. Most are summer-flowering, opening their pink flowers in the daytime; of this group only *H. baurii* and *H. huttonii* are in cultivation. Like the Western Cape species they grow from corms, renewed each year, with the plants undergoing seasonal dormancy in the cold, dry winter. In the wild, their habitats are usually damp in summer, and this is preferred in cultivation.

In my own garden *H. huttonii* seeds around gently, with its best success being in a pot of *Marsilea*, a water-fern, kept in a tray of water year-round. It would be more orthodox, however, to give these plants a sunny, well-drained position on a rock garden. Standing only 15-30cm high they should not be swamped by taller plants.

Hesperantha coccinea was placed in *Schizostylis* on account of its mostly evergreen habit and the presence of long stolons, not found in any other species of the genus. But it matches *Hesperantha* in every other particular, and as it is more important to recognise similarities than differences in modern classifications, the transfer from *Schizostylis* was made in 1996.

The transition from *Schizostylis* to *Hesperantha* is one name change nobody seems to grumble about, but the one-time common name of kaffir

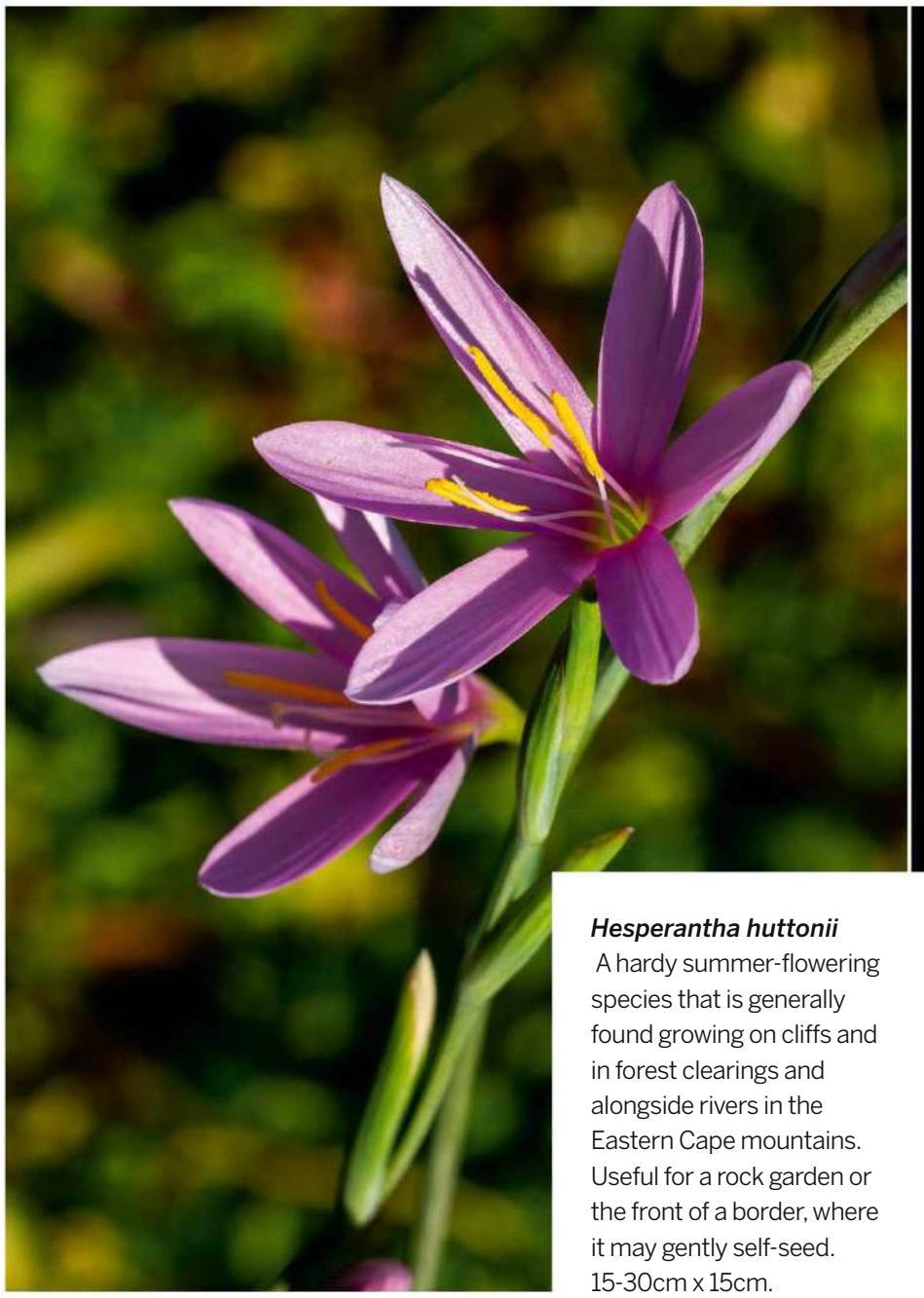
To continue turn to page 59

For the majority of gardeners *Hesperantha* means just one species, the large and splendid *Hesperantha coccinea*

ANNAICK GUITTENY; CLIVE NICHOLS / GAP PHOTOS.

***Hesperantha coccinea* 'Jennifer'**
An extremely large-flowered cultivar; its flowers are up to 6cm across, with rounded segments in pale pink, paler at the centre of the flower. It is vigorous and needs regular division. 50cm x 30cm. AGM. RHS H4, USDA 7a-9b.

ANNAÏCK GUITTENY



Hesperantha huttonii
A hardy summer-flowering species that is generally found growing on cliffs and in forest clearings and alongside rivers in the Eastern Cape mountains. Useful for a rock garden or the front of a border, where it may gently self-seed. 15-30cm x 15cm.

Hesperantha vaginata
Its striking colour attracts pollinating beetles, mimicking other similarly patterned flowers native to Namaqualand. It is a winter-growing species, flowering in the southern African spring, and challenging in cultivation. 20cm x 3cm.

How to grow *Hesperantha*

• ***Hesperantha coccinea* is best grown in rich, moist conditions in full sun.** It can survive in even quite dry places but will not perform well. The eventual height of most cultivars will vary depending on the growing conditions.

• **For best results, lift, divide and replant tired clumps** into enriched soil every two to three years, and mulch with good compost. The stoloniferous habit can take plants beyond their bounds, and pieces will remain when clumps are lifted. Weed these out by hand if necessary. Tatty, overwintered foliage can be sheared or strimmed off in spring prior to mulching.

• **In really cold areas adding a thick mulch** in late autumn will be beneficial, but in the current climate *H. coccinea* is generally hardy in the UK and Ireland and the milder parts of western Europe and western North America.

• **The winter-growing species from the Western Cape,** such as *Hesperantha vaginata* and *H. pauciflora,* are more challenging. They need frost-free, cool but well-ventilated, bright conditions, in a well-drained gritty compost, kept moist in winter but dry in summer. Best grown from seed sown in late summer. Supplemental lighting is beneficial in dull weather. These are plants best enjoyed in their wild habitat, where they mostly flower from August to September.

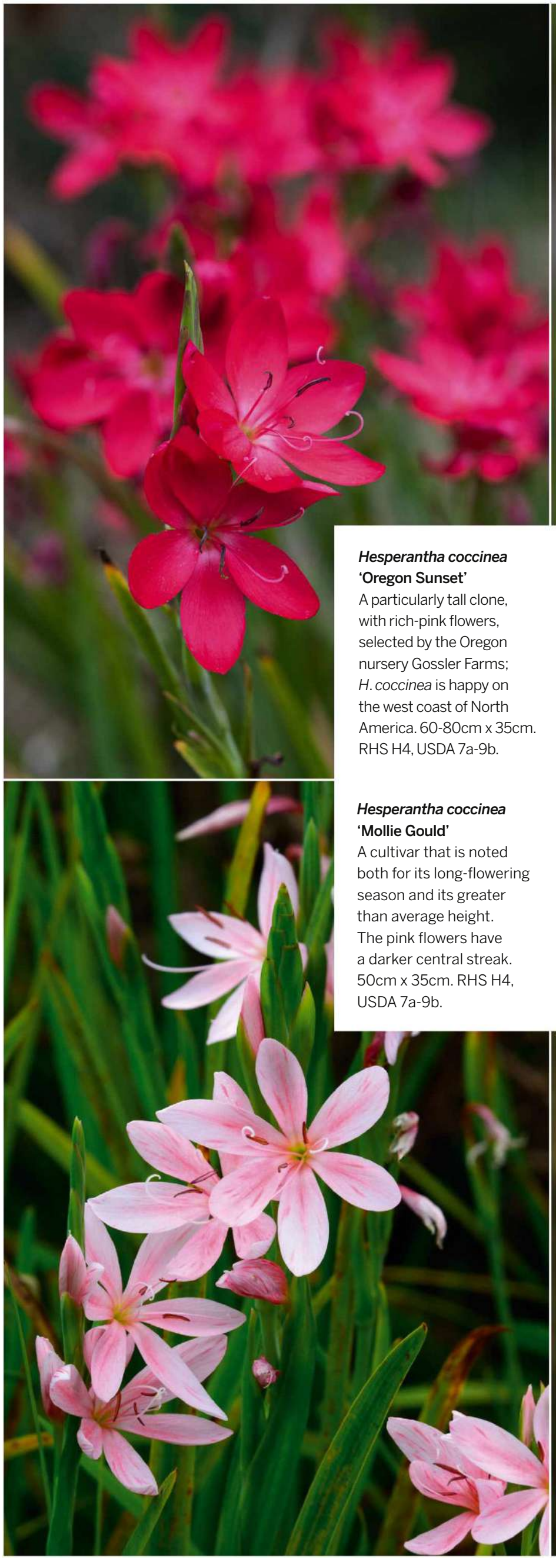
• **Hesperanthas work well in the garden when combined with other plants.** Weave *H. coccinea* among early flowering plants to provide late-season interest, perhaps over a clump of daffodils or around an iris in wetter places. In my dry garden it's not very happy, but a patch of the rich-red (neither scarlet nor crimson is probably the best description) *H. coccinea* 'Major' often manages a few stems to complement the late-flowering, soft yellow *Crocosmia* 'Ellenbank Canary' and blue-mauve *Symphyotrichum* 'Little Carlow' behind. White or pale-pink cultivars can look good with the darker colchicums, and the foliage of each can fight it out in spring.

• **A well-nourished row of *Hesperantha coccinea* in a cutting garden** will provide a long season of flowers into late autumn or early winter; robust corms could be planted in a large pot for late-season conservatory decoration.

• **Remove seedheads if not frosted** to avoid seedlings getting in among named selections.

• **Pests and diseases** are unusual in hesperanthas, but virus can cause streaking in the flowers.

TONY BAGGETT / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO: PAUL STAROSTA / GETTY IMAGES



Hesperantha coccinea
'Oregon Sunset'
A particularly tall clone, with rich-pink flowers, selected by the Oregon nursery Gossler Farms; *H. coccinea* is happy on the west coast of North America. 60-80cm x 35cm. RHS H4, USDA 7a-9b.

Hesperantha coccinea
'Pink Princess'
The pinkness of this cultivar is best seen in bud as it opens to almost white. The yellow-green ovary in the centre of the flower is quite conspicuous. 60cm x 30cm. AGM. RHS H4, USDA 7a-9b.

Hesperantha coccinea
'Mollie Gould'
A cultivar that is noted both for its long-flowering season and its greater than average height. The pink flowers have a darker central streak. 50cm x 35cm. RHS H4, USDA 7a-9b.

Hesperantha coccinea
'Sunrise'
Free-flowering and rather late, often still blooming at Christmas, this has large, rich-pink flowers standing up well above the foliage. 50-60cm x 30cm. AGM. RHS H4, USDA 7a-9b.

Hesperantha cucullata
Endemic across the Cape Provinces, this species occurs in large numbers in Namaqualand. In late afternoon its pink buds open to white flowers, with the intermediate stage being exceptionally pretty. 30cm x 60cm. USDA 9a-10.

Hesperantha bachmannii
Found in the Western Cape Province, including Namaqualand. Its fragrant flowers hang downwards with reflexed segments, giving a very unusual look for this genus. Like all the winter-rainfall species it can be challenging to grow. 25cm x 2cm.

▷ lily must be discarded, containing as it does an extremely offensive racist epithet. It is regrettable that it has persisted for as long as it has. Better alternatives include crimson flag lily and scarlet river – but as the flowers are often not even red, nor is it a lily, perhaps it would be best to adopt hesperantha as its common name.

At least 'river' indicates its preferred habitat. In the wild, where its range stretches throughout the mountains of eastern South Africa into Zimbabwe, *Hesperantha coccinea* seems almost invariably to grow alongside streams, often threading its stolons through cushions of wet moss. Where I've seen it in the Drakensberg, all members of a population have been pink- or red-flowered, never intermingled, and I do not know if they ever occur together. This colour variation has given rise to a large number of horticultural selections, ranging from rich red to white, though many are quite indistinct from each other and they're often confused in nurseries and gardens.

Fortunately, the requirement for running water doesn't extend to gardens, where *H. coccinea* will grow in any reasonable soil, almost anywhere in the UK and Ireland. Its great value is its predominantly autumn-flowering period, producing spikes of beautiful satiny flowers over a long season from August into winter: if there is no frost they may go on into December and even January. Flowers open in succession up the stem, appearing from between pale-green bracts. Standing up to 60cm tall – more in really lush conditions – the stems make good cut flowers, and if hard frost threatens it's a good idea to pick and bring them inside. To get exactly what you want it's best to see cultivars in flower at a nursery – there are both poor and good clones in all its shades. At its best *Hesperantha coccinea* is one of the glories of autumn and it's worth working towards making this happen, giving it the good living it likes and choosing its companions carefully. ❑

Hesperantha coccinea grows alongside streams, threading its stolons through cushions of wet moss

John Grimshaw is a gardener, botanist and author, and director of the Yorkshire Arboretum.

Where to buy and see

- **Beth Chatto's Plants & Gardens** Clacton Road, Elmstead Market, Elmstead, Colchester, Essex CO7 7DB. Tel 01206 822007, bethchatto.co.uk
- **Burncoose Nurseries** Gwennap, Redruth, Cornwall TR16 6BJ. Tel 01209 860316, burncoose.co.uk
- **Farmyard Nurseries** Dol Llan Road, Llandysul, Carmarthenshire SA44 4RL. Tel 01559 363389, farmyardnurseries.co.uk
- **RHS Garden Rosemoor** Great Torrington, Devon EX38 8PH. Tel 01805 624067, rhs.org.uk/gardens/rosemoor

NICOLA STOCKEN / GAP PHOTOS; JOHN MARTIN / GAP PHOTOS; JOAN GRAVELL / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; JASON INGRAM; LIZ EVERY / GAP PHOTOS; BOB GIBBONS / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO.

IN BRIEF

Name Rose Cottage.
What A contemporary perennial garden that sits alongside the nursery Pelham Plants.
Where East Sussex.
Size One-and-a-half acre garden within a two-and-a-half-acre site.
Soil Heavy worked, improved Wealden clay; slightly acidic.
Climate Temperate Maritime.
Hardiness zone USDA 9.

Surplus energy

Nursery owner Paul Seaborne's passion for propagation began as a way of filling the exuberant borders of his East Sussex garden, but seeded the idea for a successful business

WORDS **BENJAMIN POPE** PHOTOGRAPHS **ÉVA NÉMETH**

Colour, shape and form informally blend in the borders at Rose Cottage. Here *Pennisetum orientale* 'Tall Tails' elegantly arches over a stand of *Molinia caerulea* 'Dark Defender' and *Helenium* 'Fox Cub', personally selected by Paul from his seed raised stock.

Late afternoon sunlight filters through the planting towards the western side of the cottage, making this the perfect vantage point to enjoy myriad illuminated flowers and seedheads.

The garden feels exciting yet also relaxing, as curved hedges dramatically slice through the site, forming layers of shelter as well as discovery

Tucked away down a small country lane in the Weald of East Sussex sits a charming cottage. Woodland wraps around its eastern side giving it the feeling of seclusion that drew owners Paul Seaborne and his husband Glenn when they first saw the property 15 years ago. "We instantly fell in love with the place, and peace it offered," says Paul.

What it lacked was a garden. "There was a large paddock, and a few ornamental plants including red lupins and *Lysimachia vulgaris*," remembers Paul. But little else. That has changed, as has much else in Paul's life. At around the time he moved to Rose Cottage Paul left his teaching career to retrain in horticulture, and then solidified his plant knowledge by working at several plant nurseries, where he was bitten by the propagation bug. "I love the potential and buzz you get from creating new plants," he explains.

In the early days of developing his own garden he collected seeds of hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) from neighbouring trees to grow saplings for the hedging that now provides essential structure and shelter. "It seems ridiculous to grow hedging from seed but the hornbeam grows fast here and enjoys our heavy soil. There is also something rewarding about having local provenance; a connection rooting the garden with its surroundings."

As well as hedging, Paul also began to propagate herbaceous perennials to fill his new borders. "It was all about getting sufficient numbers to make a real impact," he explains. He grew plants in such great numbers that he began to sell his surplus from the gate and at local plant sales, which not only generated a small income, but also sowed the seeds of a new venture.

Today, Paul runs the nursery Pelham Plants, which specialises in choice herbaceous perennials, propagated and grown on site by Paul and his team. His garden, meanwhile, has matured beautifully, gently weaving between and separating the house and nursery with what Paul modestly describes as "a collection of stock beds for the purpose of nursery propagation".

This is far from the truth. Paul's garden may feed the nursery with plant material, but it is very much a destination in its own right. Admittedly, Paul will trial and grow plants for stock, but these are not planted in straight lines as you might expect. Instead, he creates swathes of naturalistic and ornamental plantings that organically move between the hedges and specimen trees, taking

To continue turn to page 64

8 FAVOURITE PLANTS

1 ***Helenium*** **'Fox Cub'** One of Paul's own selections. Its unusual soft-orange flowers have a rich-bronze underside, with a streaky upper side to the petals that start yellow-orange and fade to amber-bronze. 70cm x 40cm. RHS H7†.

2 ***Heuchera villosa*** **'Autumn Bride'** An attractive, semi-evergreen perennial forming a mound of large, palmate, apple-green leaves and spires of creamy-white flowers during late summer. 50cm x 50cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

3 ***Helianthus*** **'Carine'** A refined pale-yellow, perennial, multi-stemmed sunflower with mid-green leaves and dark stems, producing flowers from midsummer to autumn. 1.4m x 90cm. RHS H4.

4 ***Pennisetum alopecuroides*** **'Black Beauty'** A perennial clump-forming grass with narrow, arching, green leaves and distinctive, purplish to black, bottlebrush flowers that appear late summer and continue to autumn. 1.2m x 80cm. RHS H3.

5 ***Sphaeralcea incana*** **'Sourup'** A semi-evergreen, shrubby perennial with silvery, lobed leaves held on numerous thin stems, joined by mallow-like orange flowers from summer to autumn. 1.2m x 50cm. RHS H7.

6 ***Kalimeris mongolica*** **'Mon Jardin'** A deciduous perennial with fine graceful foliage and starry, white, daisy-like flowers that go on through all of summer. 1m x 40cm. RHS H7, USDA 6a-8b.

7 ***Salvia atrocyanea*** A tuberous perennial of great vigour rising to more than 2m with numerous lateral stems that carry the heart-shaped leaves and electric-blue flowers from late summer to autumn. 2.2m x 1.2m. RHS H4.

8 ***Helenium*** **'Die Blonde'** An upright, clump-forming perennial with daisy-shaped flowers that have a large central boss. Its clean, rich-yellow petals take on amber tones as they age in autumn. 1.5m x 40cm. RHS H7.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
†Hardiness ratings given where available.

Helenium 'Sahin's Early Flowerer', *Sanguisorba hakusanensis* 'Lilac Squirrel' and *Symphyotrichum* 'Little Carlow' gently jostle, enjoying the protection of a hedge of miscanthus and a *Pyrus calleryana* 'Chanticleer'.

Paul's garden may feed the nursery with plant material, but it is very much a destination in its own right

A pair of Adirondack chairs at the base of one of the garden's feature windbreak hedges, provide a resting spot to take in the view.

It seems ridiculous to grow hedging from seed but hornbeam grows fast here. There is something rewarding about rooting the garden with its surroundings

▷ in the different conditions. Passing from shade to sunshine through a hedge, you leave choice woodlanders, such as *Polygonatum cirrhifolium* and *Polypodium vulgare* 'Elegantissimum' and arrive to a cacophony of vibrant colourful asters, persicarias, rudbeckias and heleniums. Another turn delivers an enchanting meadow resting below a young orchard, or the visually striking impression of white-stemmed birch (*Betula utilis* var. *jacquemontii*) set simply among lawn and hedges.

The garden feels exciting yet also relaxing, as curved hedges dramatically slice through the site, forming layers of shelter as well as discovery. Alongside the plants, places to sit and enjoy the garden are top of Paul's list. These spaces have evolved much like the borders, selected by observing the seasons and the way light falls so as to maximise the enjoyment.

Nothing, however, in Paul's garden stands still for too long; plants are lifted and divided for propagation while new borders are created to accommodate the nursery's increasing range of stock. "Being on clay we try to make things easy," says Paul. "Having lots of our own compost means that we can use a no-dig approach to creating new borders, simply turning over the turf before mounding and shaping a generous layer of compost." In time the compost layer and clay below become one and the plants enjoy the best of both.

With so much change it seems impossible to imagine a quiet season, and indeed for Paul "the year begins in autumn" when much of the heavy work can take place. But, before then it is the golden hour, a time to enjoy as late summer slips into early autumn and the light becomes softer, picking out the warm russet tones and fading bright lights of the summer perennials. With the nursery always demanding attention it would be easy to think that the garden plays second fiddle, though happily this is not the case. Here, Paul nurtures not only the plants for his business, but also a spirit and sense of place that makes visiting this garden extra special. ❑

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Pelham Plants Nursery, Rose Cottage, Spences' Farm Lane, off Common Lane, Laughton, Lewes, East Sussex BN8 6BX. **Tel** 07377 145970. **Web** pelhamplants.co.uk **Open** Nursery open March to September, Tuesday to Saturday, 2pm-6pm, by appointment only. Garden open to groups of 15-25, by appointment only. See website for booking details.

1 Rose Cottage gently slopes north and sits on Wealden clay, which on the whole creates cool growing conditions that reduce the need for watering. However, the retaining wall around the sunken terrace and cottage provide free-draining and warm conditions, where Paul grows echinaceas, salvias and other sun lovers that can be beautifully appreciated at eye level when seated at the table.

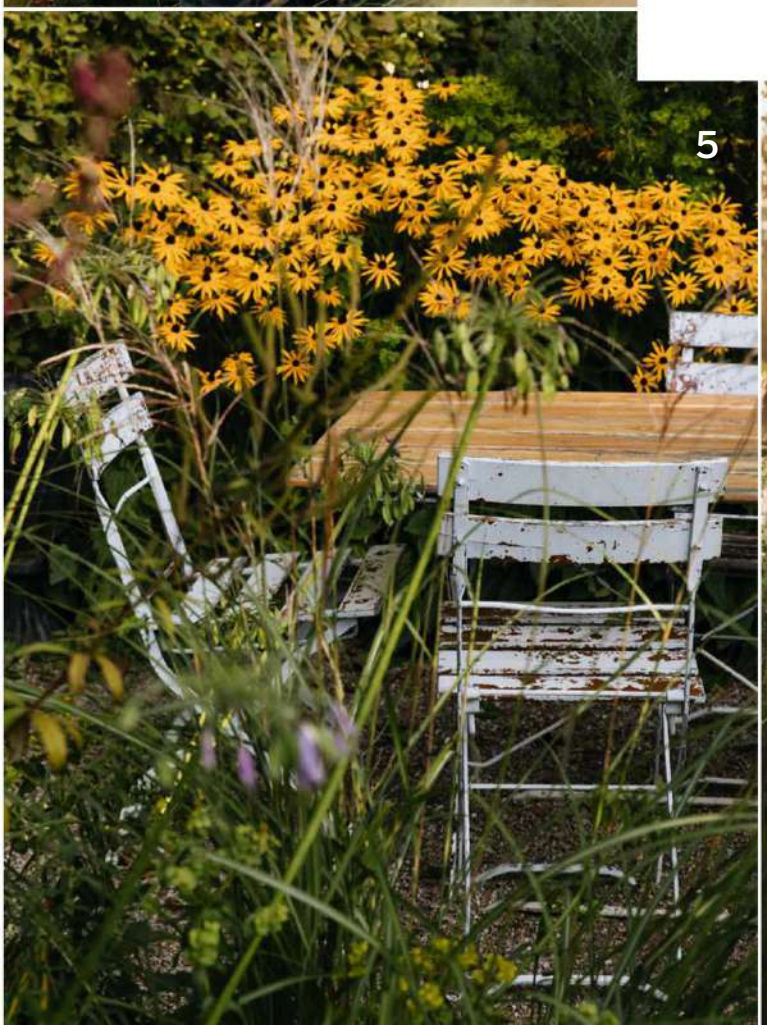
2 A network of partially hidden paths cross the garden, through gaps in hedges and between generous borders overflowing with plants. While giving access for maintenance and enjoyment, they also provide the visitor with enchanting options and routes of discovery. Bold hedges carve through the garden, anchoring the soft naturalistic planting and framing vistas to entice the viewer to discover what lies beyond, while seating offers the alternative to take a moment to sit and ponder.

3 Nursery owner Paul Seaborne surrounded by the exciting planting of his garden at Rose Cottage. On the rare occasions when he's not busy in the nursery or at a plant fair, Paul can generally be found in his garden assessing plants and making plans for new additions, or simply taking time to unwind and enjoy what the season has to offer.

4 Beneath a veteran red maple on the northwest side of the cottage is an old privy, beautifully nestled among *Ageratum houstonianum* 'Blue Horizon', *Pennisetum orientale* 'Shogun' and *Penstemon* 'Raven'.

5 Throughout the garden Paul and Glenn have created several places to rest and take in the abundant planting. Surrounding this quiet dining area the ever-reliable *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *sullivantii* 'Goldsturm' grabs attention from the developing seedheads of agapanthus and miscanthus.

6 A moment of beauty when the late summer sun begins to set, casting dramatic shadows and painting golden halos around flowers and seedheads alike. Here *Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster' and *Pennisetum* 'Fairy Tails' dance, enhancing the natural feel of the borders, with a hedge of miscanthus forming a golden backdrop.



HORTICULTURAL WHO'S WHO

NEIL LUCAS

The indefatigable Dorset plantsman and UK's leading expert on ornamental grasses, on good-sense gardening and becoming a pioneer in promoting sustainable ways of gardening

WORDS AMBRA EDWARDS PORTRAIT JUSTIN FOULKES

Neil Lucas has always been a workaholic. As a young man in his twenties, he had a full-time landscaping job, working for the local health authority, alongside a second demanding job tending the grounds of his parents' hotels in Devon. And he somehow still found time to take an interest in ornamental grasses – and to care for a national collection of *Ceanothus*.

So when, in 1994, the family decided to buy Knoll Gardens in Dorset, Neil was undaunted by the Herculean prospect of turning a rather formal, flashy garden attraction, principally geared to serving cream teas to coach-parties, into an innovative, plant-focussed, naturalistic garden. He could see the bones were there: during the 1970s, passionate plantsman John May had transformed an empty carrot field into an exotic arboretum, furnishing it with unusual, predominantly Australasian specimens. Neil found more, which had languished in a forgotten corner of a polytunnel for the intervening years. Out went the peaky rhododendrons, struggling in the garden's thin, sandy soil; in came paper mulberries and crinodendrons, alongside native spindle trees – and they flourished.

It was about this time that Neil made his first trip to California, to see *Ceanothus* growing in its native habitat. Here he was swept away by the unforced beauty and balance of native plant communities. This, he resolved, was the way to make gardens.

"It wasn't about copying what I saw, but about understanding the processes and the principles that led to that arrangement of plants in that place. A garden is a creation within the built environment, but within that framework, I began to think how we might mimic the processes we see working in nature, to create a garden as you see it today, which to me is ten times more exciting than traditional garden."

Since then, he has made many return trips to the USA, researching grasses in their native habitats for his 2011 book, *Designing with Grasses*. Meanwhile, at Knoll, more and more grasses were introduced, and their close relatives rushes and sedges, as Neil experimented with different ways of planting and grouping them, and testing their tolerance of different conditions. Bit by bit, exotic tender bedding gave way to self-sufficient plant communities; formal paving disappeared in favour of narrow bark paths threading through the planting.

"The plants are the most exciting element of the garden, and if you use them well, letting the plants do the talking, you don't have to adorn it with anything else. Rather than confining them in a border or a lawn, we give the plants centre stage, and we move around them."

At the same time as the garden was evolving, Neil was also building up a nursery business specialising in ornamental grasses. He became a stalwart of the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, winning ten Gold medals in a row. He insists he never set out to become the UK's leading authority on the subject. "But if you work with grasses for 40 hours a week for 20 years, you're bound to learn a lot. And if you work 80 hours a week, you'll know even more. So we are able to offer people the summation of our experience; to advise what may or may not work, and how best to use grasses to do different jobs in the garden."

But unlike many specialists, and despite maintaining a steady flow of new introductions, Neil doesn't seem to have that acquisitive collector's passion that distinguishes the true plant nerd. Rather, the thing that preoccupies him is the way that the style of planting he has adopted has such a beneficial effect on wildlife. "I didn't set out to be a wildlife gardener. I wanted to be naturalistic that's what moves me in the morning. And gardening in a sustainable and resource-conscious manner (minimal use of chemicals, reducing water use, not disturbing the soil and above all choosing plants adapted to the conditions) was just good-sense gardening – though now it has become front and centre. But it quickly became obvious that gardening as we did, we were seeing quite an increase in wildlife. So we have set up a charity that is tasked with trying to understand the relationship between our style of gardening and the wildlife we see here."

> IF YOU WORK WITH GRASSES FOR 40 HOURS A WEEK FOR 20 YEARS, YOU'RE BOUND TO LEARN A LOT

The aim is to share what they learn about plant choice and cultural methods with gardeners worldwide. So although Neil is now 65 years old, and has stepped down after a ten-year stint serving on the RHS Council, he shows no signs of slowing down. "It was suggested that I might like to take things a little easier, so now I'm only doing 12 hours a day, six days a week." He grins broadly. "Why would you want to retire? If I had a lot of money, I would only want to spend it on a garden. As I've got one already, I'll just continue as I am." ⊐

USEFUL INFORMATION

Knoll Gardens, Stapehill Road, Hampreston, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 7ND. Tel 01202 873931, knollgardens.co.uk. Find out more about the Knoll Gardens Foundation at knollgardensfoundation.org

• An expanded and updated edition of *Designing With Grasses* will be released next year under the title *Grasses for Gardens and Landscapes*.

Knoll
GARDENS

IN BRIEF

Name InSitu.
What Large country garden with views over rolling hills, developed over 13 years.
Where Connecticut, USA.
Size Eight acres.
Soil Fertile clay, with rocks.
Climate Hot and humid summers, long periods of snow in winter.
Hardiness zone USDA 6a.

Nestled under an old copper beech, the New England-style house (built in the 1950s) sits above the 'tent lawn', which was terraced for entertaining. In the foreground, stone steps descend through cultivars of native plants, including *Solidago rugosa* 'Fireworks', *Eupatorium dubium* 'Little Joe' and a mid-height grass, *Panicum virgatum* 'Rehbraun'.

Mass appeal

Throughout this New England garden, designer Richard Hartlage has planted swathes of single species to create a dramatic patchwork pattern

WORDS KENDRA WILSON PHOTOGRAPHS CLAIRE TAKACS

As a design approach, the phrase 'go big or go home' would make sense for any eight-acre garden but it seems particularly fitting in the New England countryside. With harsh winters, and hot summers that are reliably humid, there is a smaller plant palette with which to work than in, say, northern Europe. When American garden designer Richard Hartlage of the Seattle-based design practice Land Morphology finds plant cultivars that thrive in this climate, he plants them by the thousand.

Overlooking the rolling hills of southwestern Connecticut, this sculpture-collector's garden has a sense of panache in its planting that stands up to the wider setting. Between the swimming pool and the house, a native meadow is bisected by stone steps and grass paths, part of a pattern of swathes and swags that occurs all around the garden, in paths but also in waves of perennials and woody shrubs. "I learned that pattern from my reading of Gertrude Jekyll; long swathes of plants always look good at a distance because you get these layers when they're perpendicular to the view," says Richard, adding that planting this way brings an extra dynamism: "It gives an incredible movement in the landscape, and draws the eye out."

The reference to Miss Jekyll, doyenne of Arts and Crafts landscapes, is on point since Richard was initially called in by the garden owner to help resolve a sunken garden, which soon led to another section, and then another. The property is not compartmentalised by what we think of as 'garden rooms' but each informally delineated area has its own character. In common with the Arts and Crafts ethos, the use of local, hand-hewn materials brings a strong sense of unity, with arbours made from white pine that was sourced and planed at a small sawmill in the vicinity, and stairs and holding walls making use of the property's abundance of rocks.

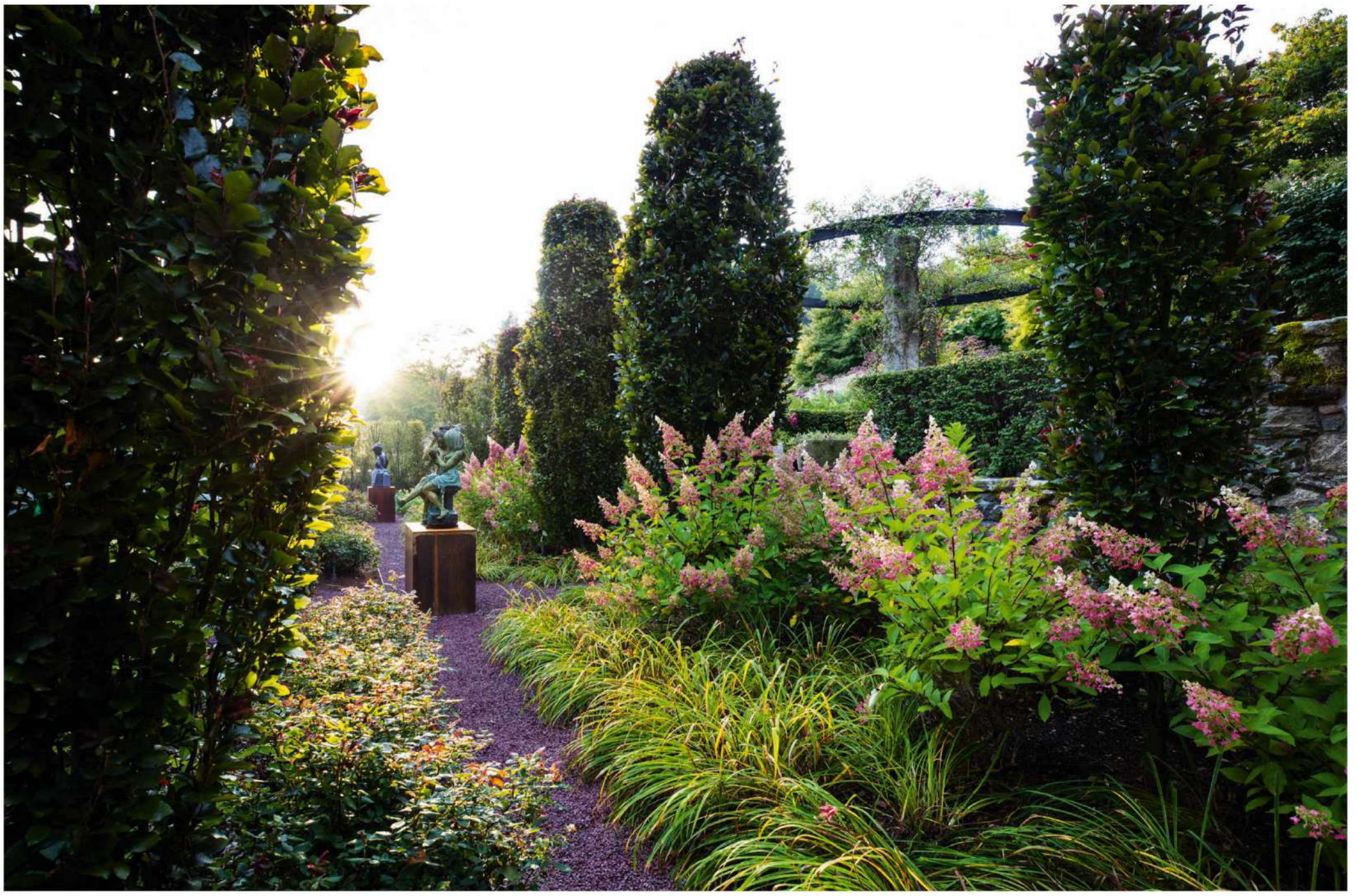
The planting, particularly of thousands of trees and meadow flowers, relates to the surrounding Connecticut vernacular of farms and woods, with repeats of tree selections within the garden to underline this sense of identity. Hundreds of Japanese maples draw attention to venerable sugar maples in the distance, and they are joined by repeats of native *Liquidambar styraciflua* and *Nyssa sylvatica* for autumn colour that will further draw in the dramatically changing colours in the landscape in the weeks to come. Sizeable dawn redwoods (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*)

To continue turn to page 74

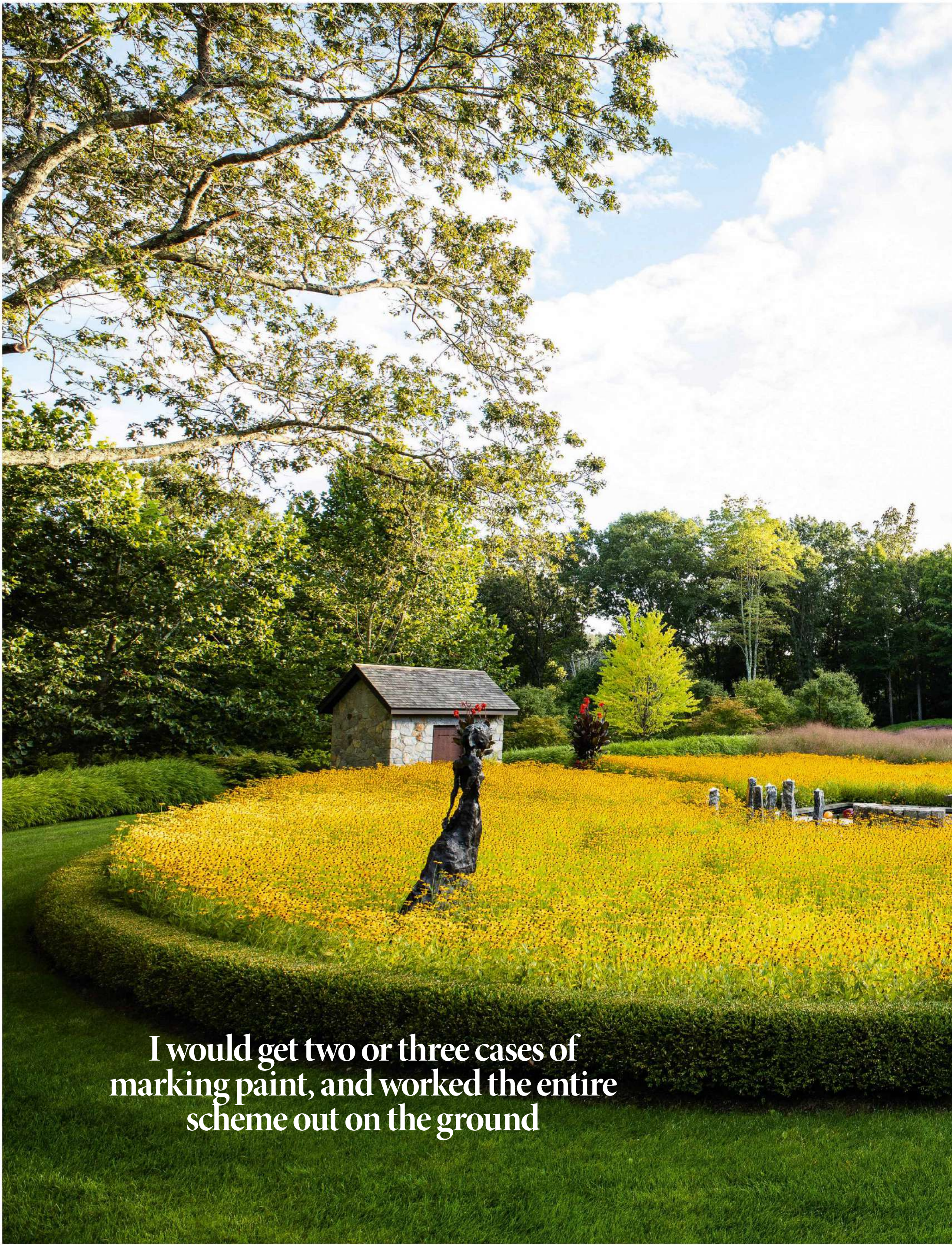
Above The garden was developed over 13 years, one section at a time. It has an Arts and Crafts vernacular, with structures of locally sourced wood and on-site stone amid the mostly native planting. An avenue of columnar *Liquidambar styraciflua* 'Slender Silhouette' gives some perspective to the scale of several fine old (non-native) dawn redwoods (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*).

Above right In the sunken garden a narrow pathway, punctuated by artworks, is lined with fastigiate *Fagus sylvatica* 'Dawyck Purple'. *Hydrangea paniculata* Pinky-Winky (= 'Dvppinky'), which blooms after the *Hemerocallis* 'Rosy Returns' at its feet, faces *Rosa* Sunny Knock Out (= 'Radsunny'), one of a group of shrub roses "wildly popular" in the USA. Above, an arbour supports rambling *Rosa* 'Excelsa'.

Right Swathes of plants that do well in this part of New England are used to dramatic effect in the pool garden. Surrounding a stone firepit, *Hosta plantaginea* f. *grandiflora*, which is fragrant when in bloom, is joined by *Hydrangea paniculata* 'Grandiflora'.



Richard uses hostas that are slug-resistant, hydrangeas that don't flop, and box hedging that is impervious to blight



I would get two or three cases of marking paint, and worked the entire scheme out on the ground

Single vision

When using large swathes of a single plant in a garden it's even more important to ensure you find the right plant for the space. Designer Richard Hartlage, whose long experience in public gardens has given him an unshakeably realistic approach, advises spending time to research the best performing cultivars rather than turning to those that are the best known. "I'm always out looking for new stuff that's very high performance and very disease resistant," he says. In this garden, he has sidestepped the issue of box blight by using *Buxus sinica* var. *insularis* 'Wintergreen'. It's one of four box cultivars, together with *B. microphylla* 'Winter Gem', *B. sempervirens* 'Dee Runk' and *B. sempervirens* 'Pyramidalis', he now uses, depending on the site, all of which he's found to have a good record of resistance.

Similarly, his choice of perennial rudbeckia was not as simple as pulling in the popular cultivar *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *sullivantii* 'Goldsturm' as he found that in this garden it developed a fungus that turned the leaves black before flowering. Always flexible and open to better ideas, his plant supplier suggested using a different variety, *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *deamii*, which is native to the Chicago region. More recently he has discovered an improvement on this native coneflower in the new cultivar *Rudbeckia fulgida* 'American Gold Rush', which is profuse in flower, disease-resistant, and makes a mounding dome of around 60cm. "That's what I use now. Absolutely incredible."

Richard used more than 2,500 *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *deamii* plants to create a perfect circle of yellow surrounding one of the garden's many water features. Framed by a low hedge of *Buxus sinica* var. *insularis* 'Wintergreen', this block of colour provides a striking setting for the owner's figurative artwork.

▷ have been planted by the score, in dialogue with the height and grandeur of native hemlocks, scarlet and red oaks and white ash at the garden's edge and beyond.

When Richard first saw the garden in 2005, there was not much to look at besides a "bad lawn". He and the garden owner mapped out the land together; the client getting a very physical idea of what was being planned, and the designer finding the experience to be enormous fun. "I would go into town and get two or three cases of marking paint, and I worked the entire scheme out on the ground before we drew it on paper and got permits," he says. "That's why, even though the garden was built in pieces, it just feels absolutely contiguous. We were literally looking at it on the ground as we were moving."

The wildflower meadow, made up of 250,000 plants comprised of native North American cultivars, is an exercise in pragmatic gardening. It was originally intended as 100 per cent wild species. "Except that the panicum got rust and the rudbeckia turned black," says Richard. Instead, he went with selected forms: American meadow regulars Joe-Pye weed, goldenrod and switch grass were upgraded to *Eupatorium dubium* 'Little Joe', *Solidago rugosa* 'Fireworks' and *Panicum virgatum* 'Rehbraun'.

Making full use of the biggest plant supplier in the US northeast at the time (now since closed), Richard's requirements were (and still are) simple: he was in search of large quantities of plants that were durable, disease-resistant and long-lived. Eminently flexible, as long as these requirements are met, Richard goes out of his way to acquire the latest "bulletproof" plant strains that perform well enough to impress his erstwhile colleagues in the public sector. "I do try to keep up on this stuff; it helps that I have such a broad range of knowledge from having worked in public gardens."

Fashion doesn't come into it: Richard uses hostas that are slug-resistant (*Hosta plantaginea* f. *grandiflora*) in the swimming pool garden, hydrangeas that don't flop, and box hedging (*Buxus sinica* var. *insularis* 'Wintergreen') that he swears is impervious to blight. As well as perennials, masses of small woody shrubs are used in tonal and textural combinations, such as mounded *Deutzia gracilis* 'Nikko' ("a fabulous shrub") and a new strain of weigela, *Weigela florida* Spilled Wine (= 'Bokraspiwi').

Gertrude Jekyll enters the conversation again: "If it works, use it well. When you go back and look at her plans, she was growing things like scarlet sage and red pelargoniums, which people wouldn't look at now," says Richard. "Any plant is fantastic if it's used appropriately." □

USEFUL INFORMATION

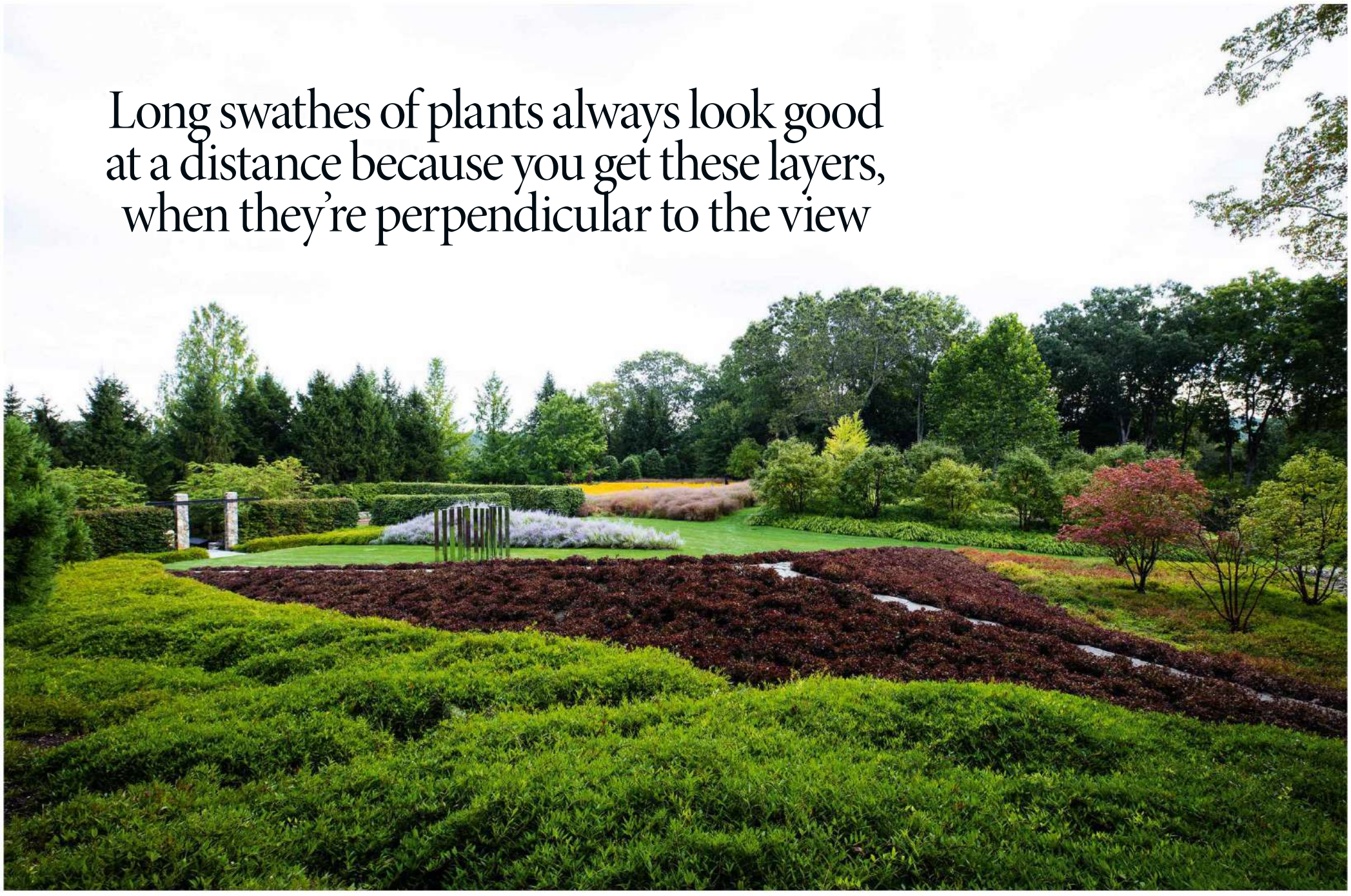
Find out more about Richard's work at **landmorphology.com**

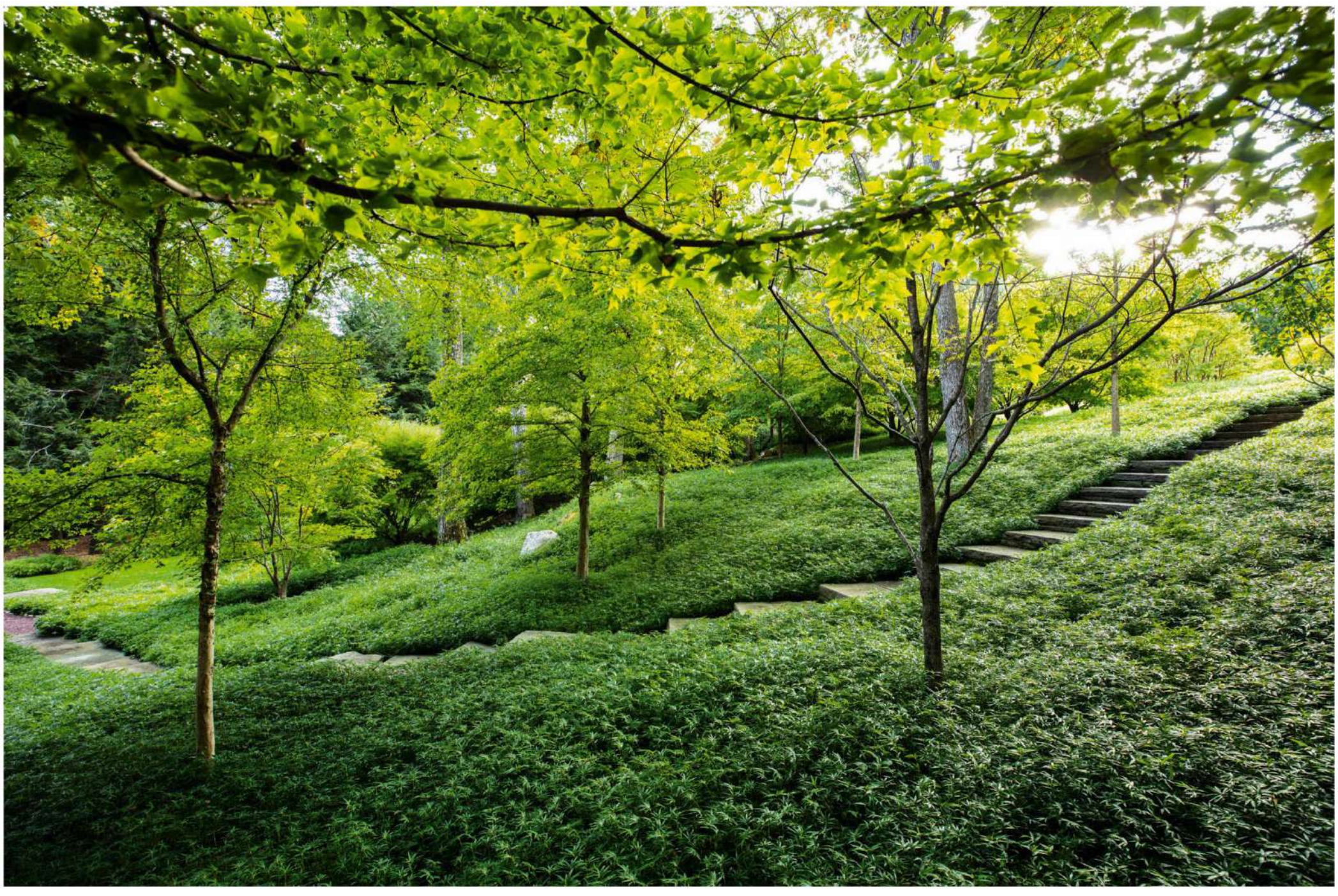
Above The bottlebrush flowers of dwarf fountain grass *Pennisetum alopecuroides* 'Cassian's Choice' remain a buff pink for months, before the foliage turns to yellow-orange in autumn. It provides a good understorey for *Nyssa sylvatica*, seen repeated with *Hakonechloa macra* to the right. A stand of *Taxodium ascendens* (pond cypress) is silhouetted against the forest edge.

Above right Richard favours woody plants and perennials for mass plantings. Stretching out like the shadow of a Concorde aeroplane, *Weigela florida* Spilled Wine (= 'Bokraspiwi') is flanked by mounds of contrasting *Deutzia gracilis* 'Nikko'.

Right Dwarf bamboo *Pleioblastus pygmaeus* 'Distichus', which grows to no more than 50cm, forms an effective green carpet in a garden that has a lot of ground to cover. Through it rise a series of Japanese maples, planted partly for their autumn colour, which will be intensified by the fiery leaves on boughs of *Nyssa sylvatica*, stretching across the foreground.

Long swathes of plants always look good at a distance because you get these layers, when they're perpendicular to the view





CLEAN CONNECTIONS

Miria Harris has created a city garden for a young family that helps forge a link between a Victorian villa and its contemporary architectural additions

WORDS **KATE JACOBS** PHOTOGRAPHS **RACHEL WARNE**

IN BRIEF

What Private family garden.
Where London.
Soil London clay, improved with peat-free compost.
Size 280 square metres, rear garden; 80 square metres front garden.
Climate Temperate. North-facing rear garden.
Hardiness zone USDA 9.

A pleasing house with a well-proportioned garden is a promising start for any garden designer. While many city gardens are long, narrow strips, this one – sitting behind a double-fronted Victorian villa in east London – is a broad rectangle, overlooked by the three back rooms. Its new owners, a couple with young children, appreciated garden designer Miria Harris's flexible approach – and the fact she was willing to listen and ask questions – and requested a garden that was full of action, but didn't feel too manicured.

Miria was excited to be brought in early on, alongside architects Built Works, and interior designer, Morrisstudio. "Garden designers often come on board once a house is finished, so it was great to be part of a close collaboration like this, to be able to consider the project as a whole."

The architect had given the mid-Victorian house a series of bold, contemporary additions and Miria saw the garden as sitting between the old and the new: "I wanted it to have a conversation with the clean lines of the new architecture and the proportions of the original house." The spare, rectilinear plan of the garden references the new elements. "I felt that introducing curves would make this garden

seem too fussy," she says, while the garden's three new boundary walls, all in mellow reclaimed brick, manage to look as though they have always been here.

As the main hard landscaping material, the York-stone paving was carefully selected to fulfil many functions, both aesthetic and practical. "The owners share my passion for sustainability, so UK stone felt the right choice," explains Miria. The irregularly sized slabs are a nod to the differently sized window panes and Crittall doors at the back of the house, suggesting age, as does the stone's riven finish. Meanwhile, the stone's pale buff tone fuses with both the new brick of the extensions and the mortar of the house's original brickwork.

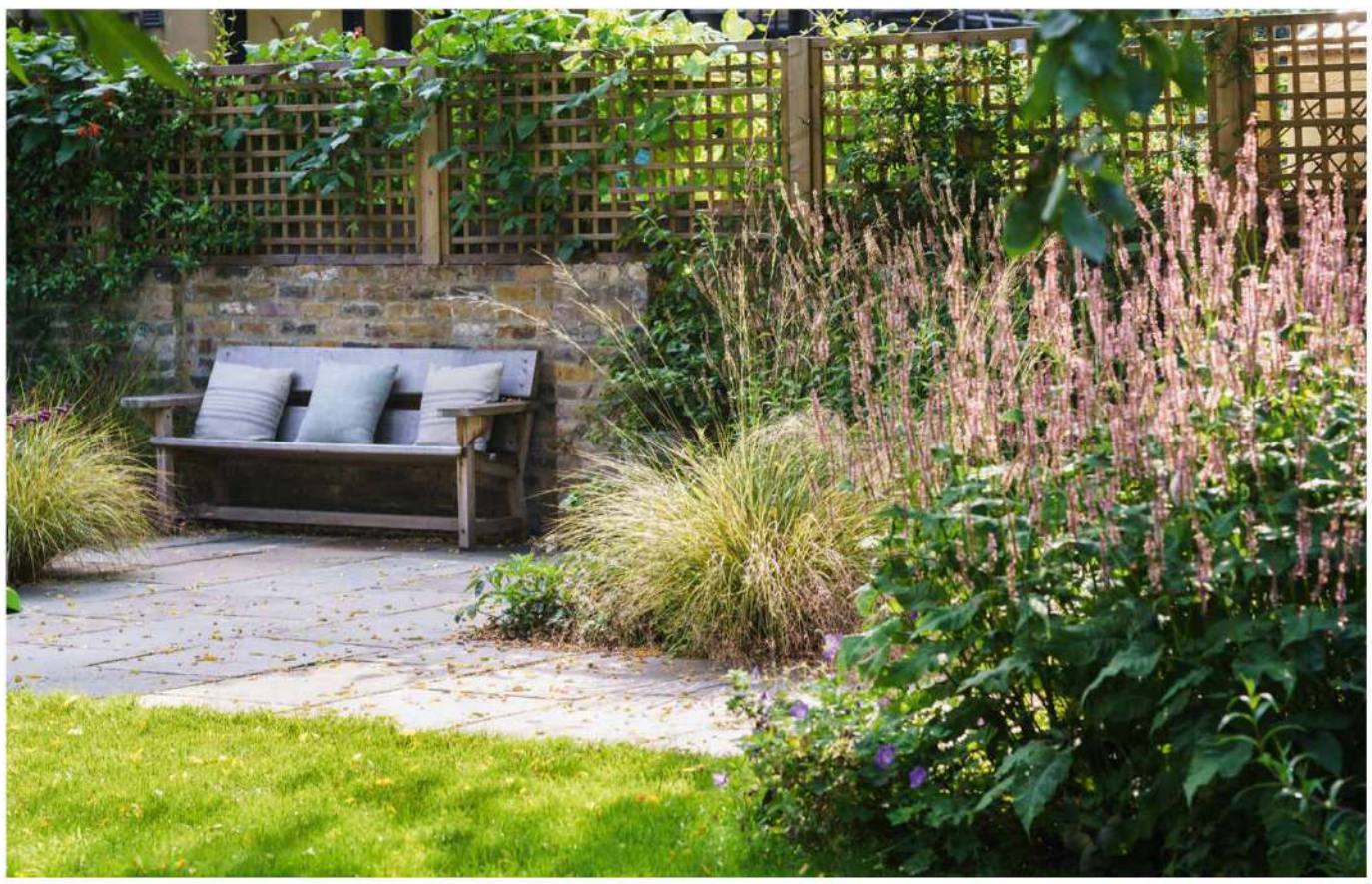
A generous band of this paving tracks around the blocky contours of the back of the house, with a couple of broad steps down to the garden, which double as a place to perch, but Miria was reluctant to site a wider terrace here. The plot is north-facing, so the sunniest spot is at the far end, where Miria has made ample space for easy chairs and a dining table under a simple cedar pergola, where it catches the evening sun. But her decision was about more than the garden's aspect.

Miria also wanted to draw people away from the house so that they are encouraged to fully experience the outside space. "The risk with a short, wide site such as this is that it can be taken in at a glance," she explains. "So my aim was to encourage people not ▷

Above left Tall plants, such as *Bistorta amplexicaulis* 'Rosea' and *Selinum wallichianum* lead the eye upwards, offsetting the drop in levels from house to garden.

Top The planting mix in the south-facing front garden was designed to be drought-tolerant with a subtle colour palette of blue, lilacs, purples and whites from plants such as *Origanum laevigatum* 'Herrenhausen' and the violet-blue flowers of *Salvia yangii* 'Blue Spire'.

Above The clean lines of the garden room extension are in sharp contrast to the horticultural fireworks in the planted areas, which partially screen the garden beyond. Hazy grasses, including *Anemanthele lessoniana,* are studded with the intense purple flowers of *Penstemon* 'Raven'. Towering over them all, a diaphanous cloud of *Thalictrum delavayi* 'Album'.



Above top Miria located the greenhouse in the sunniest spot, against the south-facing back wall where its glass roof reflects the canopies of neighbouring trees. "So that the building is partially absorbed into nature and really feels like it belongs." In front of it, raised beds allow the owners to grow a variety of edibles with the help of their young children.

Above Miria was involved in all the details of this garden, including this reclaimed timber bench by Harbour Designs. The garden walls were rebuilt with reclaimed brick, topped with a simple trellis, both chosen to gently recede into the background rather than dominate the view, while the evergreen climber *Trachelospermum jasminoides* will green up the boundaries in time.

▷ to hover by the house, but to journey out and engage with the whole garden." This she also achieves through her imaginative approach to planting.

Around a central lawn Miria has positioned densely planted beds that align with sightlines from the kitchen table, the living room and the study-cum-library. The clean lines are deliberately disrupted by banks of wild planting that joyfully burst free of the linear structure of this garden. "There are grasses such as *Calamagrostis brachytricha* that swirl in the breeze and tall plants such as airy *Thalictrum delavayi* 'Album' and the slender tapering spires of *Bistorta amplexicaulis* 'Rosea' that create a diaphanous screen providing tantalising glimpses of the garden beyond."

With one eye always on sustainability, Miria was keen to work with the garden's mature *Fraxinus excelsior* and *Robinia pseudoacacia* trees. "They offer a different scale and cast dappled shade that moves around the garden, animating different areas at different times of the day." She also added a multi-stem ornamental cherry tree, *Prunus* 'Tai-haku', to create a focal point towards the rear of the garden and to screen the dining area. Multi-stem trees, this time *Amelanchier* x *lamarckii*, also make an appearance in the front garden, which was also part of Miria's brief. The device of dense planting, here including *Pennisetum alopecuroides* 'Hameln' and *Salvia nemorosa* 'Caradonna', is repeated, but without the same need to achieve a screening height and this scheme

My aim was to encourage people not to hover by the house, but to journey out and engage with the whole garden

is drought-tolerant. This south-facing plot was once a herb garden well-known in the local community and Miria has honoured its history with *Salvia officinalis* 'Purpurascens' and *Salvia rosmarinus* 'Miss Jessopp's Upright', the latter provides strong verticals that anchor these beds through the lean winter months.

Miria likes to add edibles to her planting plans, "for humans and wildlife alike" and was delighted when the owners here asked her for a low-maintenance productive garden as part of their wish list. On the sunny back wall, there are espaliered cherry trees *Prunus avium* 'Regina' and *Prunus avium* 'Bigarreau Napoléon' with a plum tree, *Prunus domestica* 'Czar', close by, as well as raised beds where the owners grow Jerusalem artichokes, beetroot, chard and broccoli. A greenhouse was also part of the brief and while it made sense to site this against the sunny rear wall, Miria worked hard to ensure that it did not attract undue attention. Its black guttering and warm cedar timber echo the colours of the wall, while its upstand makes use of the same bricks as the new additions to the house it faces. "It was just one of the benefits of working alongside the architect to create one seamless package." □

Above At the owners' request Miria has included a central lawn on which the children can play, with selections of planting slicing into it in key areas. She has chosen the sunniest part of the garden, against the back wall, as the location for a pair of bespoke lounge chairs by furniture maker David Blair Ross. Nearby a simple pergola surrounds a dining area, that is offered additional shade from a selection of trees, including the multi-stemmed *Prunus* 'Tai-haku'. The owners specifically asked for grasses and ferns to be included in the planting scheme, and here Miria has added *Calamagrostis brachytricha* and *Dryopteris affinis* to a mix of soft planting that also includes *Selinum wallichianum* and *Geranium* Rozanne (= 'Gerwat').

USEFUL INFORMATION

For more information on Miria's work visit **miriaharris.com**

MAGIC MEADOWS

Discover how to create your own bulb meadow for next spring, with three expert plans from leading designers

INTRODUCTION VERONICA PEERLESS

At this time of year, as bulb catalogues begin to drop through our letterboxes, many gardeners start thinking ahead to spring when one of the many joys is seeing bulbs emerging, pushing new, fresh green growth up from the cold, winter-hardened ground.

We usually plant bulbs to add layers of interest to pots and ribbons of colour to our borders. But we rarely plant them in our lawns – often the most visible part of the garden in spring, with little grass growth. Many bulbs naturalise very happily in grass, where they will flower for many years to come – making this a sustainable way of planting them.

In the past few years, bulb meadows have been embraced by garden designers. Every April the meadow shown here, for example, erupts into a rainbow of colour. It was created for Villa Pisani Bolognesi Scalabrin, near Padua in Italy, by Dutch designer Jacqueline van der Kloet, using mostly perennial tulips. The result is one of the most spectacular spring garden sights.

Meanwhile, at Forde Abbey in Somerset, two interconnected swirls were created in an expanse of grass at the edge of the arboretum. Each year bulbs are planted in a trench in November and oversown with Pictorial Meadow seed, which by mid-May has taken over from the bulb displays.

Of course, this is gardening on a very large scale, but a bulb meadow can work in a much smaller space. We asked three leading garden designers to create a display for an area that is just 1m x 1m square, that can be scaled up as needed. Two of the schemes will naturalise over time, providing pleasure for many years, and all will provide a showstopping display for the height of spring. □

Turn the page for meadow plans

JASON INGRAM

TOP TIP
Wild bees and many butterflies become active at relatively low temperatures in early spring. They have a great need for pollen and nectar. Planting early spring bulbs such as snowdrops, crocus, scilla and grape hyacinths, ideally in large quantities, can contribute to the needs of these hard-working insects.
Narcissi are some of the best bulbs for naturalising in grass, able to cope with damp soil, and flower from March to May

1 NATURALISTIC STYLE

ROSANNA CASTRINI

by Carien van Boxtel

Carien van Boxtel is a landscape and garden designer based in the Netherlands. She has created several large bulb displays for the annual bulb festival at Keukenhof for Dutch bulb Company JUB Holland and has also created a bulb meadow in her own garden in Zaltbommel.

A brief overview of the planting scheme

I designed this bulb meadow scheme to be planted into grassy public spaces in the Utrecht area. It looks good from February to mid May. It is naturalistic and ephemeral in style and uses many native choices as well as plants that in the Netherlands we call *stinzen*: spring flowers, mostly bulbs, introduced many years ago that grow semi-wild in some historic landscape gardens. The popularity of *stinzen* is rising among garden designers as they are beautiful and sustainable, having survived for hundreds of years. The soil in the Utrecht locations is relatively damp and rich in nutrients, especially phosphate, potassium and lime, and not too high in nitrogen: perfect for most naturalising bulbs. I always aim for a bulb scheme to start flowering at the end of winter with delicate winter aconites and snowdrops (preferably two varieties as this will prolong the flowering period). Crocuses will follow soon after, at varying times.

I love to mix bigger and 'louder' species (*Crocus vernus* or *Crocus flavus*) with the more delicate species, such as *Crocus tommasinianus* or pastel-coloured *Crocus chrysanthus*. By mid March other bulbs will pop up as the crocuses are finishing: scillas, grape hyacinths, fritillaries, scillas and pushkinias. Narcissi are some of the best bulbs for naturalising in grass, able to cope with damp soil, they're deer and rabbit resistant and a range will flower from March to mid May. Pops of further late colour come from beautiful species tulips.

Carien's tips on planting a bulb meadow

- Make a bulb-planting list in which you take flowering periods, colour, height, foliage, scent and quantities into account.
- 'Right plant right place' applies to bulbs as well: some bulbs love warm, sunny conditions, others prefer shade or semi-shade.
- More is more: better to plant too many bulbs than too few.
- Bulbs are relatively hungry plants: make sure that your soil is healthy, a bit chalky, airy, full of life, with a pH of 7 or more. I top dress my lawn every year in late autumn with a thin layer of home-made compost, right after planting the bulbs. A feed of organic seaweed or other potassium-rich fertilser during the growing season is recommended.
- Drainage is key: clay, ideally mixed with grit, is fine for most bulbs as long as it is not too compact; add organic matter to poor, sandy soils.
- Every bulb needs at least six weeks after flowering to die back before mowing. In most cases, the leaves lift off with no resistance. If you can't delay mowing, use species that flower from January to mid March, or plant them in out-of-the-way grassy areas, under trees or in woodland areas where you can allow the grass to grow longer.
- To enjoy early flowering bulbs in grass from February you need to do a late mow in November to keep grass low before regrowth starts.
- Plant naturalising bulbs under trees with leaves that break down quickly, such as hazel, ash, or fruit trees.
- For bigger areas or hard soil, try a foot-powered, long-handled bulb planter or a drill. For large areas, you can hire a bulb-planting machine.

CARIEN VAN BOXTEL

Carien's plant list

***Eranthis hyemalis* Cilicica Group 10 bulbs** I always start at the end of winter with this delicate flower. Its cheerful, bright-yellow flowers are attractive to early flying pollinators. Flowers February – March. 10cm x 10cm. RHS H6†.

***Galanthus elwesii* 10 bulbs** A reliable, early flowering, large snowdrop. The flowers have two green spots on the inner petals. February – March. 20cm x 10cm. AGM*. RHS H5, USDA 4a-7b.

***Galanthus nivalis* 15 bulbs** The fragrant, common snowdrop, used to prolong interest. February – March. 20cm x 10cm. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 3a-7b.

***Crocus tommasinianus* 'Barr's Purple' 25 bulbs** One of the earliest crocuses to flower. The flowers are lilac-purple with orange stamens. February – March. 10cm x 5cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

***Crocus angustifolius* 10 bulbs** Bright-yellow flowers with burgundy feathering. Scented. February – March. 10cm x 10cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

***Crocus flavus* 5 bulbs** Bright-yellow, goblet flowers. February – April. 10cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

***Crocus* 'Gipsy Girl' 15 bulbs** Large, fragrant, yellow flowers with stunning purple stripes on outer petals. February – March. 10cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

***Muscari latifolium* 15 bulbs** The two-tone flowers are blue-black at the base and pale violet at the tip. The flowers are sterile so will not set seed. March. 20cm x 10cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

***Muscari azureum* 15 bulbs** This grape hyacinth has azure blue flowers that are lightly scented. It is particularly good in meadows as it flowers early and has less foliage than most muscaris. March and April. 10cm x 10cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.

***Narcissus* 'February Gold' 15 bulbs** A good early daffodil for grass. Good alternatives are 'W.P. Milner' with a pale-cream trumpet and near-white petals, or taller 'Sailboat' (40cm), with lemon trumpets and swept-back petals. February – April. 30cm x 10cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

***Narcissus pseudonarcissus* 25 bulbs** I use this wild native or *Narcissus obvallaris*, both of which self seed. Availability can be a problem so I often substitute with the shorter 'Topolino' (15cm). March – April. 30cm x 10cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

***Tulipa turkestanica* 15 bulbs** One of the best tulips for grass, which flowers year after year. Its white blooms have a stroke of silver-grey on the outer petals. March – April. 30cm x 10cm. AGM. RHS H5.

***Fritillaria meleagris* 15 bulbs** The snake's head fritillary is widely naturalised in the UK. Distinctive, nodding, chequerboard flowers in March and April. 40cm x 8cm. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 3a-8b.

***Scilla sardensis* 20 bulbs** Nodding, deep-blue flowers with white centres in March and April. 10cm x 10cm. AGM. RHS H6.

***Scilla siberica* 20 bulbs** The Siberian squill has nodding, bell-shaped flowers and slender, leaves in March and April. 20cm x 5cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 2a-8b.

***Puschkinia scilloides* var. *libanotica* 20 bulbs** Star-shaped white flowers with a blue stripe in March and April. 10cm x 5cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

***Leucojum aestivum* 15 bulbs** Pendent flowers, like giant snowdrops. Needs a wet spot. March – May. 50cm x 10cm. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

***Tulipa sylvestris* 10 bulbs** The queen of all tulips is not always easy as a naturalising bulb but once you have seen her golden crown on slender bent stems you will be hooked. April. 30cm x 20cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

***Narcissus* 'Actaea' 15 bulbs** Beautiful pheasant's eye cultivar. April – May. 45cm x 10cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

***Narcissus* 'Hawera' 25 bulbs** A later-flowering daffodil that has moon yellow, swept-back petals. April – May. 20cm x 5cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

***Narcissus poeticus* var. *recurvus* 15 bulbs** The most elegant of all daffodils. Include for flowers in May, if you can resist mowing until then. 35cm x 10cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.

2 BOLD AND BRILLIANT

CHARLIE HOPKINSON

by Jo Thompson

Jo Thompson is one of the UK's top garden designers and plantswomen, winning multiple medals at RHS Chelsea Flower Show. She is passionate about bulbs and the colour effects they can create, and is the author of *The Gardener's Palette* (Timber Press, £35).

A brief overview of the planting scheme

This bulb meadow was created as part of the planting scheme for the Bell Inn in Ticehurst, East Sussex. It was designed to peak in April and May, with early interest provided by daffodils. The showstopper of the whole scheme is *Fritillaria imperialis* 'Orange Beauty' (crown imperial). Its dusty-orange bells create enormous flowerheads that hover above everything else.

Anemone coronaria 'Mister Fokker' provides a haze of blue in the background. Blue plays in important role in the way it makes a garden seem to recede – you can just see how it does that here with its smudge of violet-grey sidling off and away into the distance. Having come out early, the light but not white shades of the narcissi add to that idea of a meadow that is naturalistic, rather than full of formal bands of colours. Here, we have *Narcissus* 'British Gamble', *Narcissus* 'Reggae', *Narcissus* 'Furbelow' and *Narcissus* 'Blushing Lady', with buttery yellow petals or pink trumpets to pick up the yellows in the *Fritillaria imperialis* 'Orange Beauty'.

The crown imperial, the bride of the show, gave the cue for the types of tulips I needed to choose. In another deep, warm rich colour, is *Tulipa* 'Antraciet' in the most sumptuous of crimsons and reds, scattering a touch of bold across the scheme. Her double flowers are strong enough to hold their own against the fritillary's orange forms, and that's all the bold I need.

Some gentle pastel was needed to relieve the whole thing and tie up and in with the daffodils. *Tulipa* 'Poco Loco' and *Tulipa* 'Apricot Impression' bring this pastel in well, the pinks tones in their petals highlighted by their companions. *Tulipa* 'Aafke' does have a touch of lilac in it, which in theory might make me question its proximity to the fritillary, but I was pretty sure that *Tulipa* 'Antraciet' and the blue anemone would make it feel welcome. I've also popped in *Tulipa* 'Big Love' for some proper pink.

There are still yet more flowers from bulbs to come. The giant bluebell-like camassia will start to send up spires as the tulips fade: I've planted *Camassia leichtlinii* subsp. *suksdorfii* Caerulea Group, and after that, the alliums will have their moment.

Jo's tips on planting a bulb meadow

- In November I mix the bulbs in trugs, and then I scatter and plant them where they fall.
- If I'm stripping the turf back, I'll cover the bulbs with chicken wire to protect them from hungry squirrels, and then I cover with soil, upping the quantities of bulbs to get as much of a feeling of coverage as possible.
- If you have deer, they will also eat your tulips. So I would bump up the allium and narcissus quantities as they can't bear either of these.
- I top up this scheme every year, although some bulbs, especially the narcissi, will come back.
- Deadheading is essential.

Jo's plant list

***Anemone coronaria* 'Mister Fokker' 5 bulbs** The colour blue performs an extremely important job in the way it makes a garden seem to recede. And with this beautiful anemone you get a wonderful smudge of violet blue to grey sidling off and away into the distance. It bears large, cup-shaped, violet-blue flowers that have black centres. The flowers float above attractive, finely toothed, mid-green foliage. Soak the tubers overnight before planting. Flowers March – April. 25cm x 20cm. RHS H5, USDA 7a-10b†.

***Narcissus* 'Blushing Lady' 5 bulbs** The daintiness of this daffodil makes it an absolute essential for me when I'm designing bulb meadows. Small enough to have a hint of wildness, it naturalises fabulously. March – April. 30cm x 10cm. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

***Narcissus* 'British Gamble' 3 bulbs** An early flowering daffodil that has huge and distinctive, pale flowerheads. Pastel peaches and pinks into lemon, and then folding out to white. These are also great for cutting, if you can bring yourself to do so. March – April. 45cm x 20cm. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

***Narcissus* 'Furbelow' 5 bulbs** Frills and furbelows – this daffodil has them all, with rich egg-yolk tones singing out the sunniness of springtime. And a sweet fragrance. March – April. 40cm x 20cm. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

***Narcissus* 'Reggae' 3 bulbs** Elegant and chic. This daffodil's pale-pink centres are just enough to pick up the oranges of *Fritillaria imperialis* 'Orange Beauty' (shown right). It has ivory-white, flared and swept-back petals. March – April. 50cm x 10cm. AGM*. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

***Tulipa* 'Antraciet' 7 bulbs** The most sumptuous of crimsons and reds, scattering a touch of bold across the scheme. The double flowers are strong and bold enough to hold their own against the orange of the crown imperial. April. 45cm x 10cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

***Fritillaria imperialis* 'Orange Beauty' 3 bulbs** This crown imperial (shown right) is definitely the star of the show in the meadow at the Bell Inn. Dusty-orange bells create enormous flowerheads that hover above everything else in a very satisfying manner. April – May. 90cm x 30cm. RHS H4, USDA 5a-8b.

***Tulipa* 'Aafke' 3 bulbs** The flowers of 'Aafke' have a touch of lilac in their petals, strong enough to form a good point of almost Schiaparelli pink. April – May. 30cm x 10cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

***Tulipa* 'Apricot Impression' 3 bulbs** I also use this for its pastel hues – the pink petals are blushed with a soft salmon orange. It is a Darwin Hybrid Group tulip with large flowers and sturdy stems that stand up well to poor weather. April – May. 50cm x 15cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

***Tulipa* 'Big Love' 3 bulbs** Large, dusky-pink flowers on stems nearly 60cm tall pick up the tones of 'Aafke' and echo them at height. A barnstorming performance all round. April – May. 60cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

***Tulipa* 'Poco Loco' 3 bulbs** This tulip cultivar brings in some much-needed gentle pastel. The pink tones of the petals are highlighted by their companions. It is a Fosteriana tulip, with a large flowerhead. April – May. 40cm. RHS H4, USDA 3a-8b.

***Allium hollandicum* 'Purple Sensation' 9 bulbs** An allium that seems to be everywhere at the moment but one that never fails to delight. Its improbable bobbles of purple and violet look wonderful dotted through the scheme, and are followed by striking seedheads. May. 50cm x 20cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-9b.

***Camassia leichtlinii* subsp. *suksdorfii* Caerulea Group 5 bulbs** These giant bluebell-like camassias will start to send up spires as the tulips fade. Bees love them too. May. 50cm x 20cm. RHS H4, USDA 5a-9b.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.

KATY DONALDSON

TOP TIP
Squirrels will do anything to get their paws on a tulip. If I'm planting into grass, after covering with chicken wire, I'll replace the turf as well as I can – squirrels are masters at spotting disturbed ground, so leave no trace. Scattering dead leaves seems to put off the less sharp of the species.
The showstopper is the crown imperial; its dusty-orange bells create enormous flowerheads that hover above everything else

TOP TIP

Many of the bulbs will require deadheading after flowering, with their foliage left so that the leaves send energy back into the bulb for next year's display. Or leave the flowers to set seed, which will spread about to help with the naturalisation process.

Fritillaria elwesii.

Narcissus bulbocodium 'White Petticoat'.

Tulipa humilis 'Persian Pearl'.

Tulipa sylvestris.

Tulipa cretica 'Hilde'.

Tulipa aximensis.

Tulipa humilis 'Helene'.

Tulipa saxatilis (Bakeri Group) 'Lilac Wonder'.

Anemone blanda 'White Splendour'.

Crocus 'Pickwick'.

Muscari azureum.

Iris tuberosa.

3 JEWEL COLOURS

by Tom Eaglestone

Tom Eaglestone is associate landscape designer at Arne Maynard Garden Design. He is a plant enthusiast with a passion for bulbs and a keen gardener. Here, he has created an entirely new planting scheme exclusively for *Gardens Illustrated* readers.

A brief overview of the planting scheme

For this bulb meadow, I have selected either species bulbs or those that are naturalistic in their appearance and will happily naturalise in grass over time. I have aimed for a jewel-like effect, bringing a much-needed splash of colour at a time of year when we are all craving it. I have also chosen bulbs that will stay relatively neat in habit, providing a carpeted display when fully naturalised.

The fritillary is an absolute must-have and works so well with the narcissi and muscari I have chosen. The cultivars of *Narcissus bulbocodium* (several are available in addition to the one I have selected) are the most delicate, beautiful bulbs and always turn heads. *Crocus biflorus* 'Blue Pearl', with its splash of yellow at the bottom of the petals, works really well with the narcissi and *Tulipa sylvestris*. You could extend the display by adding snowdrops and aconites for late winter and alliums for colour into early summer.

Tom's tips on planting a bulb meadow

- Order bulbs mid-to-late summer for autumn delivery – especially for the rarer, hard to come by bulbs.
- Have a supply of organic, peat-free compost to hand if necessary – you may feel you want to slightly improve the soil when you begin to create planting holes.
- Ensure you have a good supply of grit for adding to the mix.
- Tools required may include a bulb-planting auger or a bulb planter that removes a clod of soil and turf for planting your bulb into.
- Select a well-drained patch of turf, with a good level of sunlight throughout the day.
- Mix the dry bulbs together and distribute them by hand over the area you would like to develop, then plant them where they land. This will help create a naturalistic effect and will ensure you have an even spread of textures and colours.
- A good rule of thumb is to plant bulbs three times as deep as their height, so depending on the bulb, you might need to dig a slightly deeper hole.
- Try mixing the special crocus bulbs with the more common *Crocus tommasinianus*, which will naturalise quicker, leaving lovely clumps of the more unusual choices. This will in time look very natural.
- You can extend the seasonal interest of the display by adding snowdrops or winter aconites for an early display or some *Allium* cultivars to extend the colour into late May and early June.
- Some of the bulbs will naturalise quicker than others helping to further create a naturalistic appearance to the display.
- Many bulbs are toxic to humans if ingested, so be mindful if planting with children and take care to wash your hands after planting.

READER OFFER

Gardens Illustrated readers can save 15 per cent on organically grown, naturalising bulbs from **organicbulbs.com**. See page 114 for details.

Tom's plant list

***Iris* 'George' 5 bulbs** In my opinion, the most beautiful of the reticulated iris. Often one of the first of the spring bulbs to flower. Flowers February – March. 10-12cm x 10cm. AGM*. RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b†.

***Iris tuberosa* 5 bulbs** Commonly known as the snake's head iris, this beauty has a very detailed flower that demands to be inspected close up. It looks great when naturalised and works well early in the season alongside snowdrops. February – March. 20-30cm x 50cm. RHS H5, USDA 5a-9b.

***Crocus* 'Pickwick' 5 bulbs** This large crocus naturalises slower than its cousin *Crocus tommasinianus*, so looks great mixed in clumps with the latter. A popular cultivar for good reason, with stripy petals that open each day for a wonderful display. February – March. 10-20cm x 3cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

***Crocus biflorus* 'Blue Pearl' 13 bulbs** The delicate flowers can get battered by winter weather, but the colour at this time of year is worth the risk. A wonderful foil for brighter bulbs. February – March. 5-10cm x 5cm. RHS H6, USDA 4b-10a.

***Fritillaria elwesii* 3 bulbs** One of the lesser-grown fritillaries, with gorgeous foliage and majestic, but neat, stems of dark brown and green-petalled flowers. It looks fantastic against a white-flowering bulb. March – April. 30-35cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

***Tulipa humilis* 'Helene' 7 bulbs** Easy to grow either as part of a meadow mix, or in pots. The flowers are a truly gorgeous pink and very reliable. March – April. 10-20cm x 10cm. RHS H5, USDA 3a-8b.

***Muscari azureum* 5 bulbs** This delicate, species grape hyacinth has the added bonus of being deer and rabbit resistant. March – April. 10cm x 10cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.

***Narcissus bulbocodium* 'White Petticoat' 13 bulbs** I love all the hoop-petticoat species daffodils but this is a particular favourite. Its delicate, thin foliage offsets clusters of pure-white flowers, which contrast perfectly with *Tulipa humilis* 'Persian Pearl'. March – April. 10-15cm x 10cm. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

***Anemone blanda* 'White Splendour' 13 bulbs** A woodland favourite. Its simple, but beautiful flowers look lovely when naturalised, which only takes a year or two to achieve. March – June. 5-10cm x 20cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

***Tulipa humilis* 'Persian Pearl' 5 bulbs** Looks best before the flower even opens. The yellow centre makes the deep purple even more vibrant. Naturalises easily. Add plenty of grit when planting. April – May. 15cm x 7cm. RHS H5, USDA 3a-8b.

***Tulipa sylvestris* 5 bulbs** No garden should be without this understated, species tulip, unless you really don't like yellow. It has a gentle, citrusy fragrance, which adds to the spring interest. April – May. 30cm x 10cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

***Tulipa cretica* 'Hilde' 7 bulbs** This unusual Cretan tulip can withstand the winter cold of the UK. Its dusky pink and pale-cream flowers are small but pack a punch. April – May. 10-20cm. RHS H5, USDA 3a-8b.

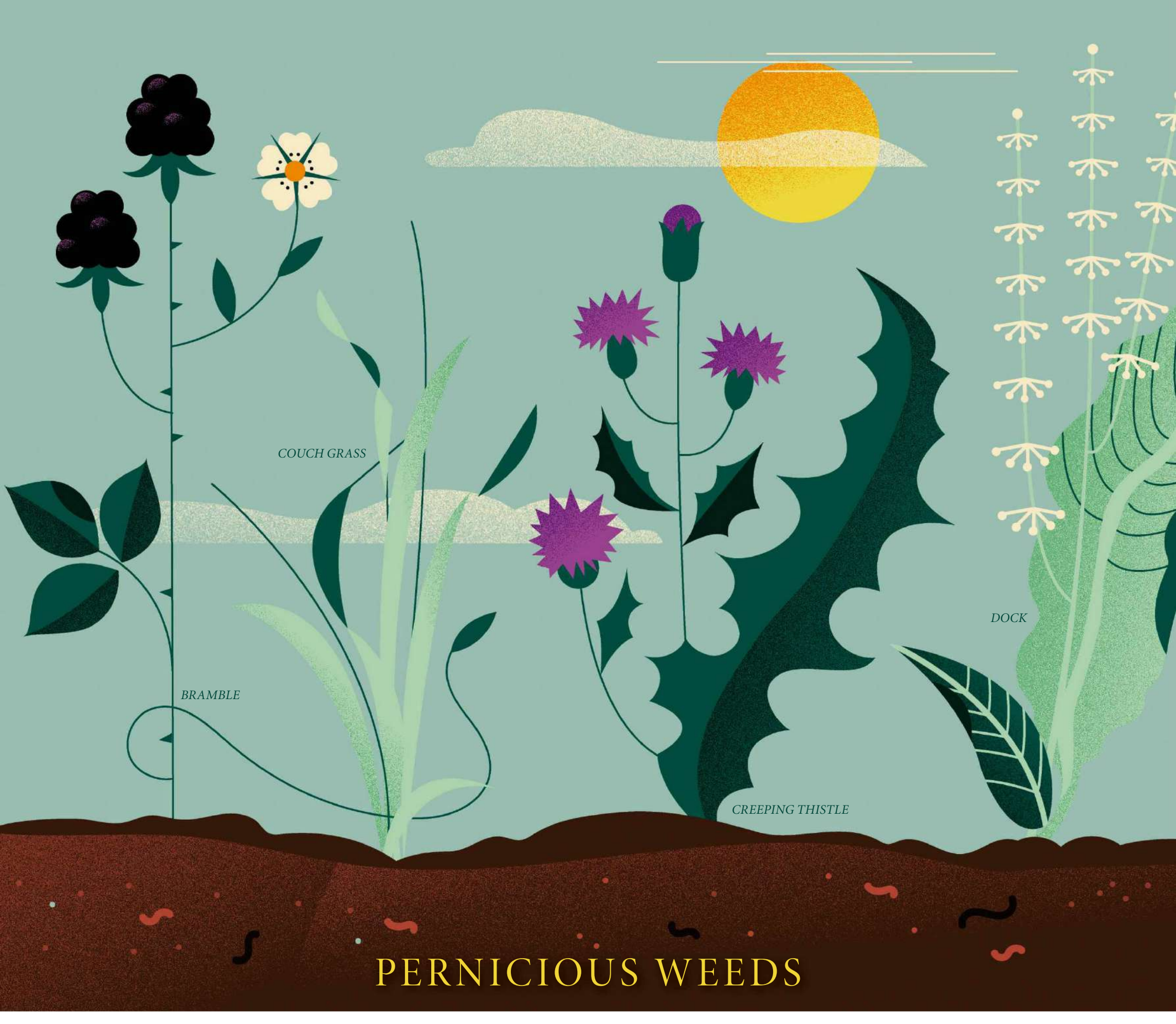
***Tulipa saxatilis* (Bakeri Group) 'Lilac Wonder' 5 bulbs** Particularly great in the morning and evening light. Looks stunning with *Tulipa* 'Helene', especially when naturalised in large groups. April – May. 10-20cm x 10cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

***Erythronium dens-canis* 'Lilac Wonder' 5 bulbs** An absolute beauty that looks great when naturalised. Great for pollinators. April – May. 20-30cm x 10cm. RHS H5, USDA 3a-8b.

***Tulipa agenensis* 3 bulbs** This wild tulip species originated in France. It flowers a little higher than the other tulips in this mix, bringing a pop of colour to the scheme towards the end of the flowering period. May. 30-40cm x 10-20cm. USDA 3a-8b.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.

TORIE CHUGG, ADRIAN JAMES, VISIONS PREMIUM, CHRIS BURROWS, HEATHER EDWARDS (KEUKENHOF GARDENS, HOLLAND), RICHARD BLOOM, MAXINE ADCOCK / ALL GAP PHOTOS; JASON INGRAM; 6 RM FLORAL / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO.



WINTER AWAKENING

The idea that our soil is slumbering during winter is simply not the case. Instead there is much to do to support soil during the darker months to create the perfect conditions come spring

WORDS ALYS FOWLER
ILLUSTRATION DARLING CLEMENTINE/ THE ARTWORKS

It is easy to imagine that the soil, like much else, is in a deep sleep throughout winter. The notion of a slumbering earth under a blanket of snow is a pleasing image, but it is a fairy tale, for the soil no more sleeps that the rest of the garden. The soil food web, the network of microbes, bacteria, fungi, algae, arthropods, gastropods, earthworms and the rest, is very much in the business of keeping going, but can only do so with active plant growth.

Much like the rest of the year, the soil really doesn't want or need to be bare over winter. The idea that a hard frost is helping to break it down or is killing off slug eggs flies in the face of the millions of years of evolution.

Many of the soil food web's microbes require exudates from the plants' root tips. Exudates are substances released by the plants, which contain among other things sugars, amino acids and organic acids, and act as a kind of communication method between the plant roots and the soil microbes – essentially the plant is feeding the microbes in order to enlist their help.

Exudates effect nutrient availability, soil pH and the further recruitment of bacteria and fungi to aid the plant. If you cut this

communication method off by closing down the network by clearing the soil of plants and weeds, you are not in fact giving the soil a break, as you might perhaps think. Rather, you are asking for a huge reboot in spring, while all the microbes have to inoculate the soil again. So, the first rule of nurturing your soil in winter is to leave it ticking over.

Weeding regimes

This could be as simple as leaving the winter weeds in places. As winter weeds are in growth they are still producing exudates, unlike say many herbaceous perennials, which are dormant and so not feeding the soil food webs. Leaving weeds over winter may go against the received wisdom, but most of the winter weeds are actually very easy to remove in spring, when you want the bed back. They are annuals that can withstand the harsher conditions of the weather and lower light levels and make the most of lack of competition.

Think of the tiny bittercresses or the more exuberant chickweeds that love to move in over winter: their root systems are shallow and their lifecycles over by spring. Their mat of leaves protects the surface of the soil from beating rains and harsh winds, and below their root tips are keeping the chorus in tune. Treat them like a free green manure. That they will also flower early to feed emerging pollinators is another reason to rethink this lot as friend rather than foe.

Green manures

Leaving weeds in place just does not suit some systems: vegetable beds empty of their summer annuals or newly made borders can be vast spaces to maintain. In this case, you may want green manures. Hardy winter types that will create a dense sward to protect the soil physically as well as locking up nitrogen in their deep-green leaves to return to the soil in spring.

Hungarian grazing rye, winter tares and field beans will sup up available nitrogen that is water soluble and easily lost to winter rains. Winter tares and field beans have deep root systems that are also very good at penetrating through clays. Far better than any digging you can do. These should be sown as soon as crops are cleared from late September into early November. ▷

Mulching

The other option for protecting the soil is to mulch it. It looks neat and tidy and helps to highlight winter-interest plants. A winter mulch will insulate the soil, and thus all the soil microbes, as well as protecting the very precious top layer from both wind and rain erosion. Mulches also prevent soil compaction caused by heavy rains.

The best mulching regime excels when used in conjunction with compost. Put the compost or manure down first and then cover with a mulch. The soil compost organisms will inoculate the mulch and begin to decay it as well, all of which will end up feeding the soil food web. You do not want to go heavy on this though, be careful not to add too thick a layer, 5-8cm is all that is needed. Too thickly and the mulch will block moisture and air to the soil and smother mycorrhizal fungi so important to trees and shrubs. Do not mulch right up the trunks and stems of plants, as this can cause microbial decay of the plant itself, so leave a little moat around the plant.

Comparing manures

Finally, you may wish to increase fertility by adding composts and manures over winter. It's best to do this in autumn and early winter. These do not need to be dug in, the worms will do the work for you, instead they should be added as a layer over the soil surface. All manures, however, are not made equal; a cow will digest grass in quite a different way to a donkey, and their manures will have a different composition and nutrients. You want to make sure that any manure you use is herbicide free. Herbicides such as aminopyralid, clopyralid, and picloram, used in production of straw for animal bedding, can pass through the animal's digestive tract and persist in manure and compost. They are lethal to sensitive garden plants, such as annual vegetables. The reality is that getting hold of good organic manure is not always easy, so go for whatever you can get rather than worrying about which animal it comes from, but if you can vary the manure year on year – horse, cow, pet bedding etc – then you will benefit from their different compositions. ❐

Creating a new bed – lasagna mulching

Winter is perhaps the best time to create a new bed. There is little else going on, both in terms of gardening, but also visually, so you can get a good sense of the whole garden layout and where your new bed might sit within this. There is no need to dig over this bed, which will just damage the soil structure, but instead you can use recycled materials both to feed the soil food web and rid yourself of grass and weeds. 'Lasagna' mulching means using layers to do this. The pasta layer in this lasagne is sheets of recycled cardboard, which you should water as you put it down. This helps to mat the cardboard together, and make sure the sheets overlap so there are no gaps. The filling is rough compost, leaf litter, spent mushroom compost, spent maltings from breweries or any other bulky compost you can get your hands on. If you are just killing off grass you can get away with one layer of cardboard but if you are tackling docks, brambles and bindweed and couch grass, you will need two or three layers of cardboard and bulky compost. This is because the pernicious weed will grow through the cardboard and compost, but several layers will considerably weaken their system and even if they do make it through to the surface, are easy enough to remove by hand. To make the whole thing look neat you can top it off with a layer of mulch or grass clippings if you are still mowing. This acts, if you like, as the béchamel sauce. If you start off a bed this way in late autumn, by early spring you will have a perfectly workable bed ready to plant into.

Top layer Cover with grass clippings for a neater appearance.

How many layers? One layer of cardboard then compost is fine for laying on to an area of grass. More layers if aiming to clear an area of tough weeds.

Compost filling Create alternating layers of rough, bulky compost and dampened cardboard, or newspaper.

Foundation layer Lay dampened cardboard over the area where the new bed will be.

SEASONAL GUIDE TO SOIL

Leave good weeds Certain winter weeds can act as free green manure as they are annual and thus will naturally die off by late spring. These include bittercresses (*Cardamine*), chickweed (*Stellaria media*), sow thistles, (*Sonchus*) and henbit (*Lamium amplexicaule*).

Keep an eye on bad weeds They are also plenty of perennial winter weeds, such as docks, dandelions and herb bennets. Docks are perhaps the most pernicious, and winter is a good time to hand weed them out. But don't waste their mineral-rich roots and leaves, rot them down in a bucket of water (the compost heap might not be hot enough in winter to break them down) and use this weed soup to feed the compost in spring.

Add mulches to physically protect the soil Well-rotted pine needles, aged bark mulch, wood chips, well-rotted manure, seaweed, rough compost, leaf mould and semi-rotten leaves are all excellent choices for the winter.

Gather up autumn leaves Leaves and leaf mould mulches are particularly good at supporting fungi in the soil, which will benefit fruit bushes, shrubs and trees. Leaf mould is easy to make, just wrap a pile of leaves in a material that has good air circulation, such as chicken wire.

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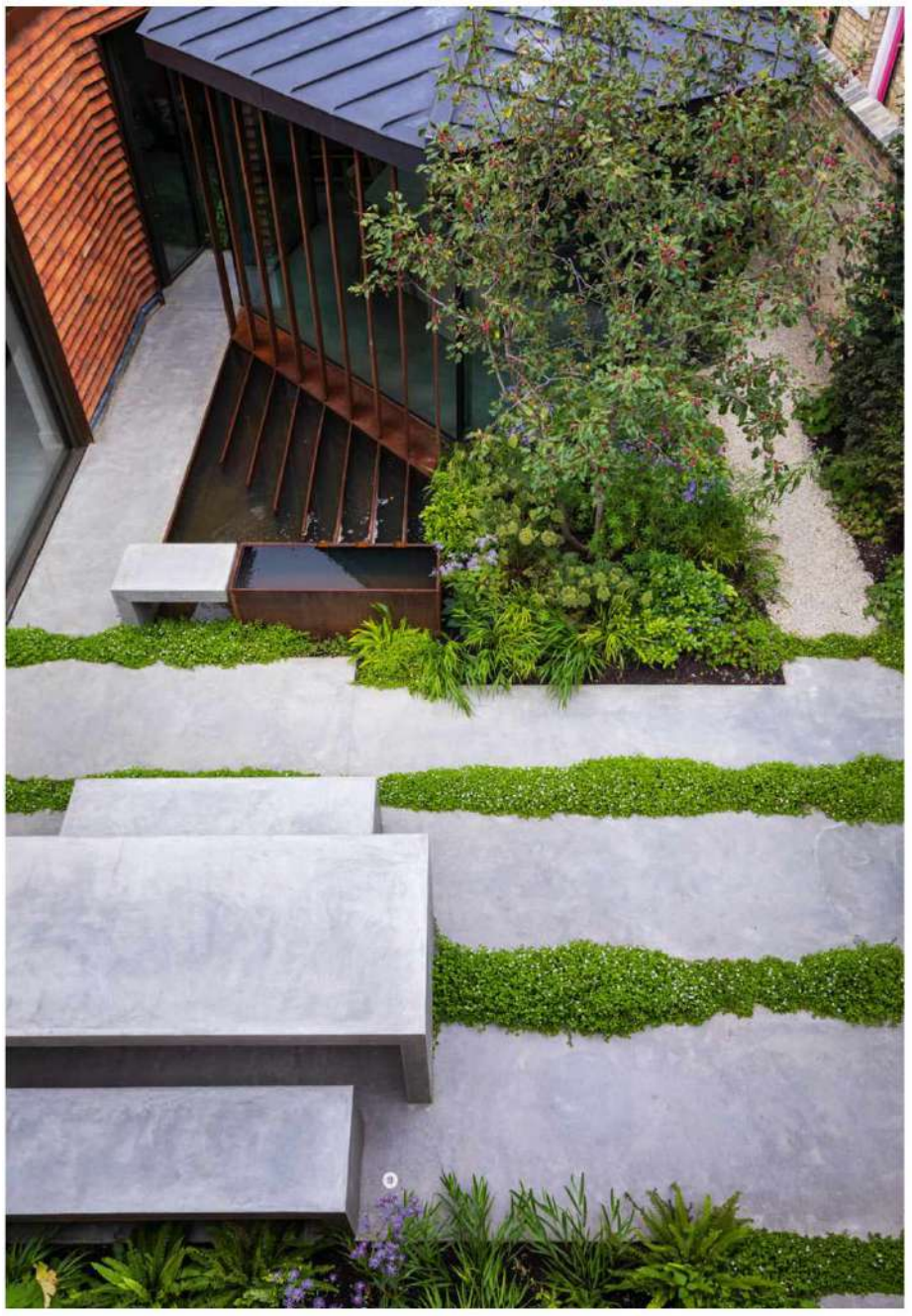
MATERIALS WEALTH

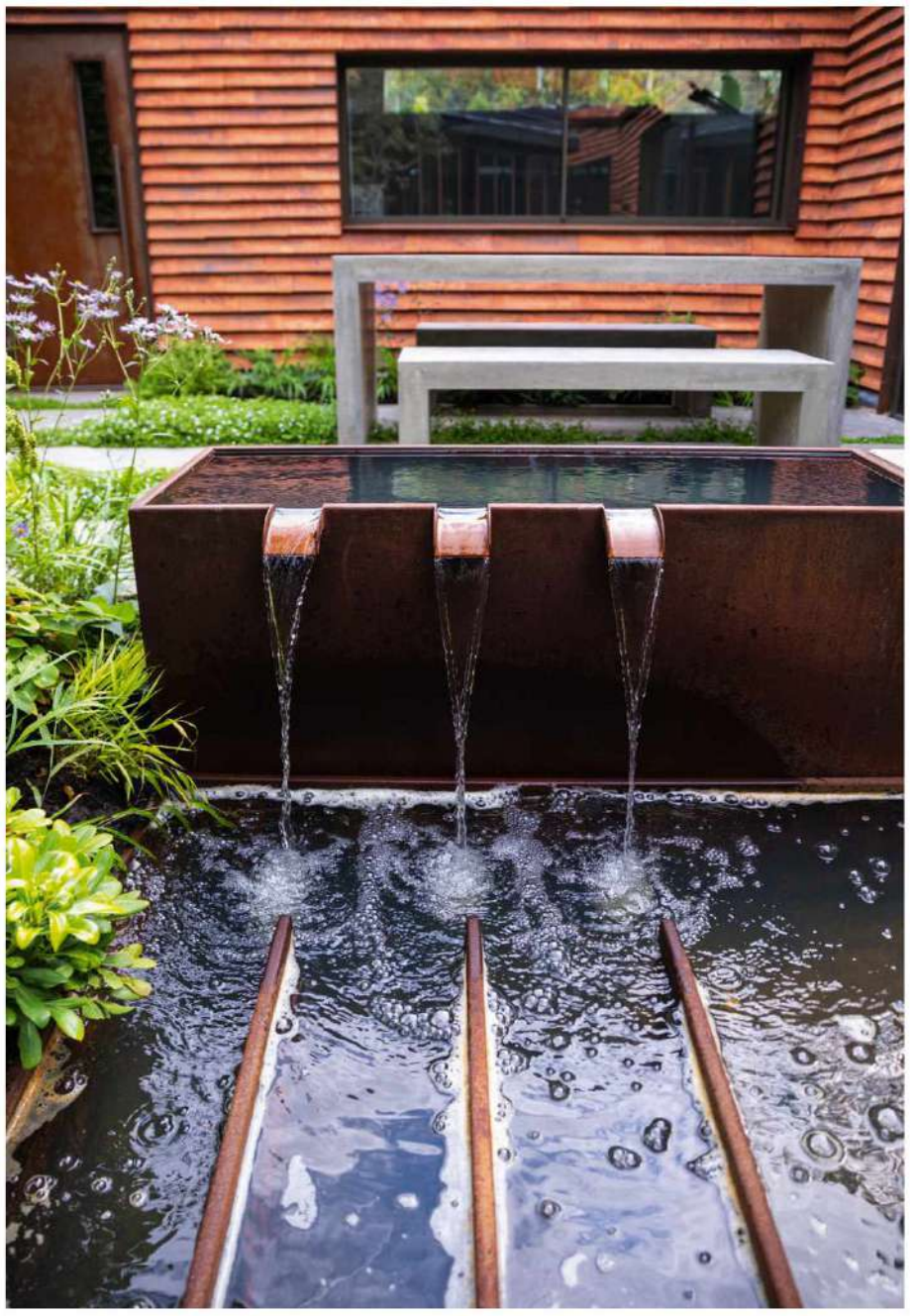
In this small city courtyard, designer Colm Joseph has used clean lines, a pared-back palette of materials and lush, woodland planting to create a sense of space and calm

WORDS CHRIS YOUNG PHOTOGRAPHS RICHARD BLOOM

IN BRIEF

What Small courtyard garden, bordered by buildings on three sides, that makes clever use of hard landscaping materials.
Where Cambridge.
Size 8m x 6m.
Soil Imported topsoil from HortLoam.
Climate Southeast-facing garden in one of the warmest and driest parts of the UK.
Hardiness zone USDA 8.





There's long been debate in landscape design teaching about whether it's easier to design a small space or a large garden. Larger gardens can be a challenge when trying to divide them into usable areas, considering borrowed views, or ensuring there is an element of planting consistency.

However, in smaller gardens every detail counts; material considerations can be contentious; and there's no fudging any part of the build. It's a debate that no doubt will carry on for years to come, but for designer Colm Joseph this city garden was just as much a challenge as any of his larger projects.

Colm's practice is based on the Cambridgeshire-Suffolk border, and he's been designing classy, considered yet usable spaces for the past five years. "I was in international development before I retrained as a garden designer – I wanted to do something more creative and stop travelling as much," he explains.

This garden – measuring just eight metres by six metres – is a clear statement of creativity. Engaged by the previous owners in 2020 towards the end of a substantial architectural renovation by of a Victorian villa in central Cambridge, Colm's task was to bring cohesion to a space dominated by PiP Architecture's bold architectural extension. In addition to a new kitchen there is a corridor that runs the full length of the garden leading to a home office, and these structures feature an array of materials from clay Petersen Kolumba bricks and Corten steel, to floor-to-ceiling glass, polished concrete and zinc. This was no ordinary space, and no ordinary smörgåsbord of materials.

"I was excited about dealing with a bold material palette," says Colm. "But I needed to bring cohesion and harmony. The clients wanted a social and recreational outside space, but it also needed to look good through the year as it is viewed on three sides."

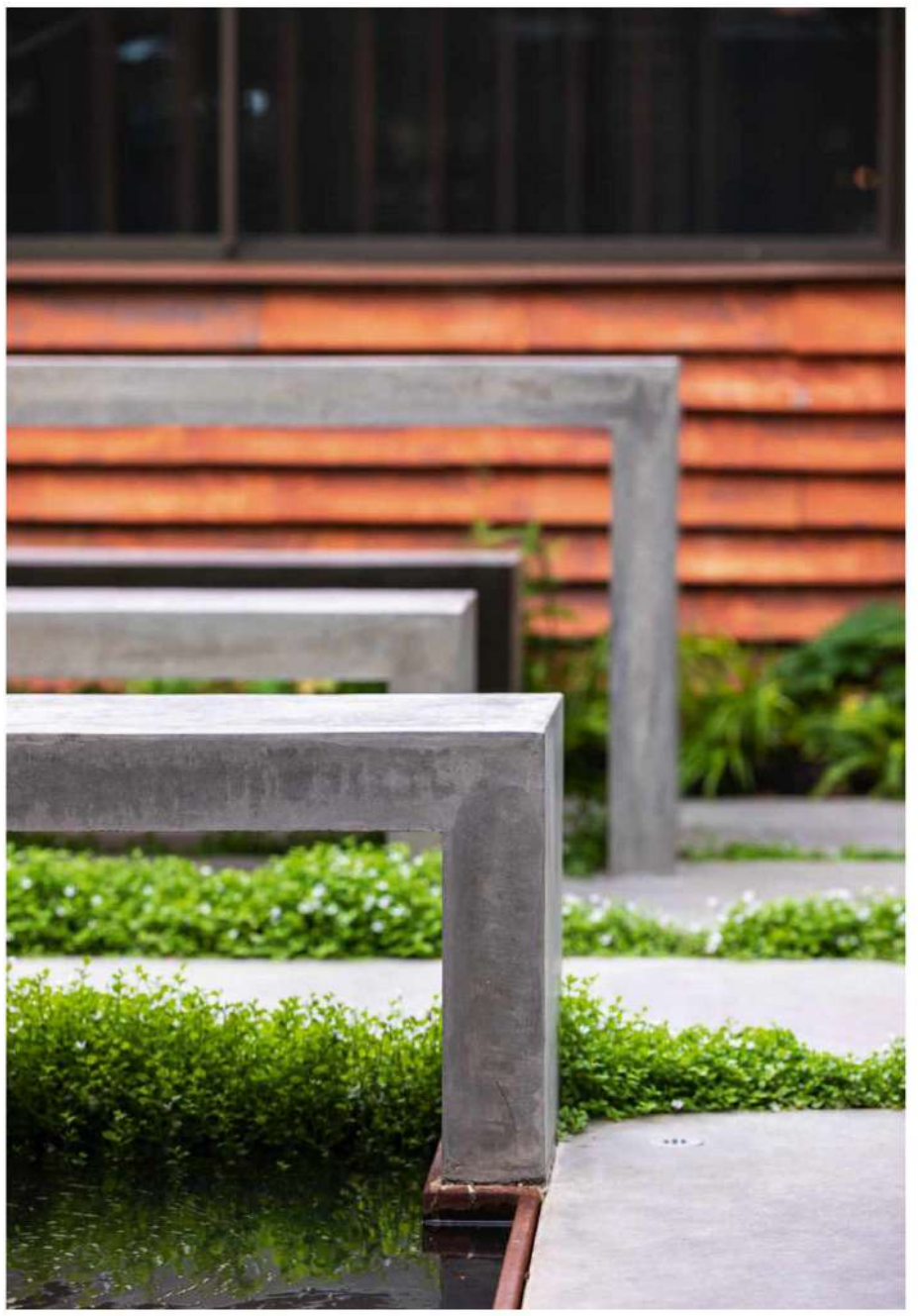
The end result is a space that is as bold as the architecture, but supports the build rather than upstaging it. Material quality is high: in situ poured concrete paving (the same as inside the house) links to the outdoor bespoke table and benches (made in situ from poured concrete). The gravel path to one side matches the brick wall behind the hedging; Corten steel fins in the water feature seamlessly blend from the kitchen window louvres.

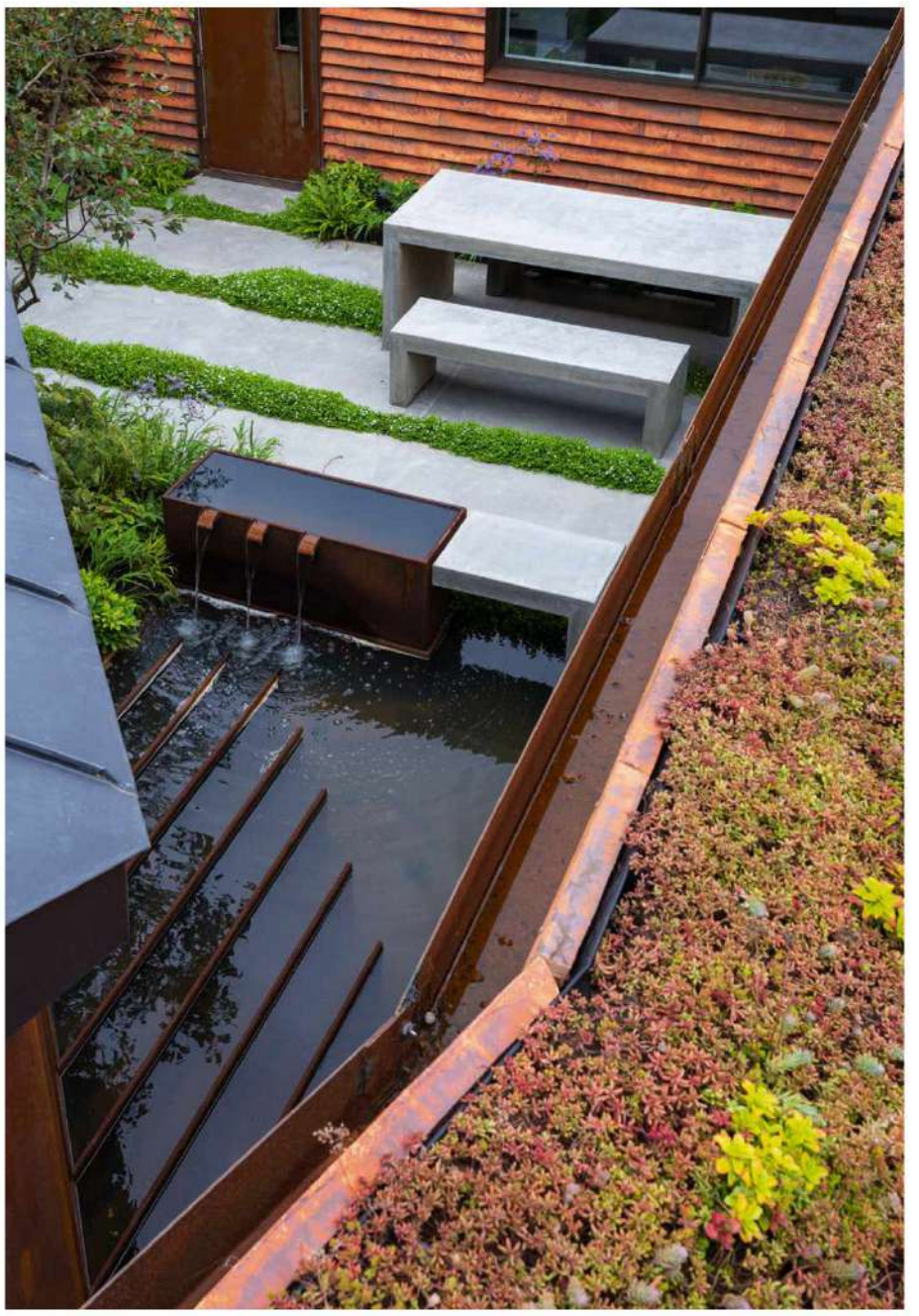
It's not all straight lines and hard materials. Natural elements – moving water, structural planting and a seasonal colour palette – help soften the space and bring it to life. A row of pleached beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) cover the only border not backed by a built structure, and together with a multi-stem crab apple, *Malus* 'Rudolph', add height and vertical interest. Beneath the ▷

Facing page In this small courtyard garden, buildings fill three of the four boundaries. To introduce some green into the space, Colm has covered the only boundary not defined by a building with pleached panels of beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), and sited a multi-stem *Malus* 'Rudolph' in the heart of the garden to connect it to the house.

Above left By placing the main planting and water feature directly outside the kitchen extension, Colm has softened this striking, zinc-clad structure. Beyond, the elongated horizontal lines of the concrete furniture and paving harmonise with the geometry of the office studio.

Above right The bespoke Corten steel water feature brings calm and helps to cool the garden in warmer weather. A series of Corten steel fins set within the pool link the trio of gently flowing cascades to the kitchen's vertical louvres and echo the clay bricks used as cladding for the office studio and corridor.





Above left Poured concrete, which has been used internally for flooring, is extended out into the garden where it is softened by creeping *Pratia angulata* 'Treadwellii'. The garden table and benches are also cast in situ from poured concrete to a bespoke design by Colm.

Above right Occupying the corner between the office studio and the long, green-roofed corridor that links it to the house, the bespoke table and benches create a shady and private seating area. The crab apple tree adds further screening and dappled shade.

Facing page The multi-stem *Malus* 'Rudolph' provides height and seasonal interest. Underplanted with a mix of evergreens, such as *Blechnum spicant*, and flowering plants that begin with a series of bulbs and continue with the likes of *Geranium* 'Nimbus' and *Eurybia macrophylla* 'Twilight', it ensures there is always something of interest to look out on.

▷ crab apple, woodlanders such as *Geranium phaeum* 'Album' and *G.* 'Nimbus' mix with the fern *Blechnum spicant* and spring-flowering epimediums on the lower storey. Baltic parsley, *Cenolophium denudatum*, hovers around waist height. It's not complicated planting, but ingenious additions, such as the white-flowering *Pratia angulata* 'Treadwellii' grown between the paving slabs, make the 48 square metres feel special. In spring, tulips, snowdrops and daffodils add to the floral interest.

What does Colm feel about it, on reflection? "The strong linear arrangement helps integrate the garden and architecture," he believes. "While the restrained materials and natural elements bring calm to the space."

The balance does seem to have been achieved. City gardens are often 'hard' by their nature; surrounded by walls, fences or buildings, their boundaries can be seen in one visual sweep. But the art of the garden designer is to interrupt that view, to excite the eye and tease the brain with detail, texture, movement and seasonality. In this small urban retreat, there's a great bringing together of house and garden, garden and house. Who says small gardens are easy to design? ❐

USEFUL INFORMATION
Find out more about Colm's work at **colmjoseph.co.uk**

Small steps

Some key techniques Colm uses to make small gardens feel more immersive and inviting

Simplify and unify the boundaries. Unless existing boundaries have inherent beauty or character, such as an old wall, I like to screen and green them. Hedging or climbing plants conceal boundaries, allowing your eye to rest within the space. Disguising boundaries also helps the garden feel larger.

Stick to a pared-back, restrained palette of hard materials to create harmony. I usually keep to two, or maximum three, different hard-landscaping materials repeated throughout. If it makes sense, consider repeating materials used in the architecture or interior.

Avoid the mistake of pushing everything to the perimeters, leaving internal areas feeling empty. Whether it's a small tree, tall planting, built or sculptural elements, introducing some mass helps partially conceal, reveal and frame views, adding a greater sense of depth to the space.

Introduce natural elements to soften hard materials, bringing these natural elements close to windows and the house-to-garden transition areas. This helps give the garden an immersive feel and integrates the interior and exterior.

Pay careful attention to screening for privacy, to ensure you feel comfortable using the garden.

I needed to bring cohesion and harmony to the space; it needed to look good through the year as it is viewed on three sides

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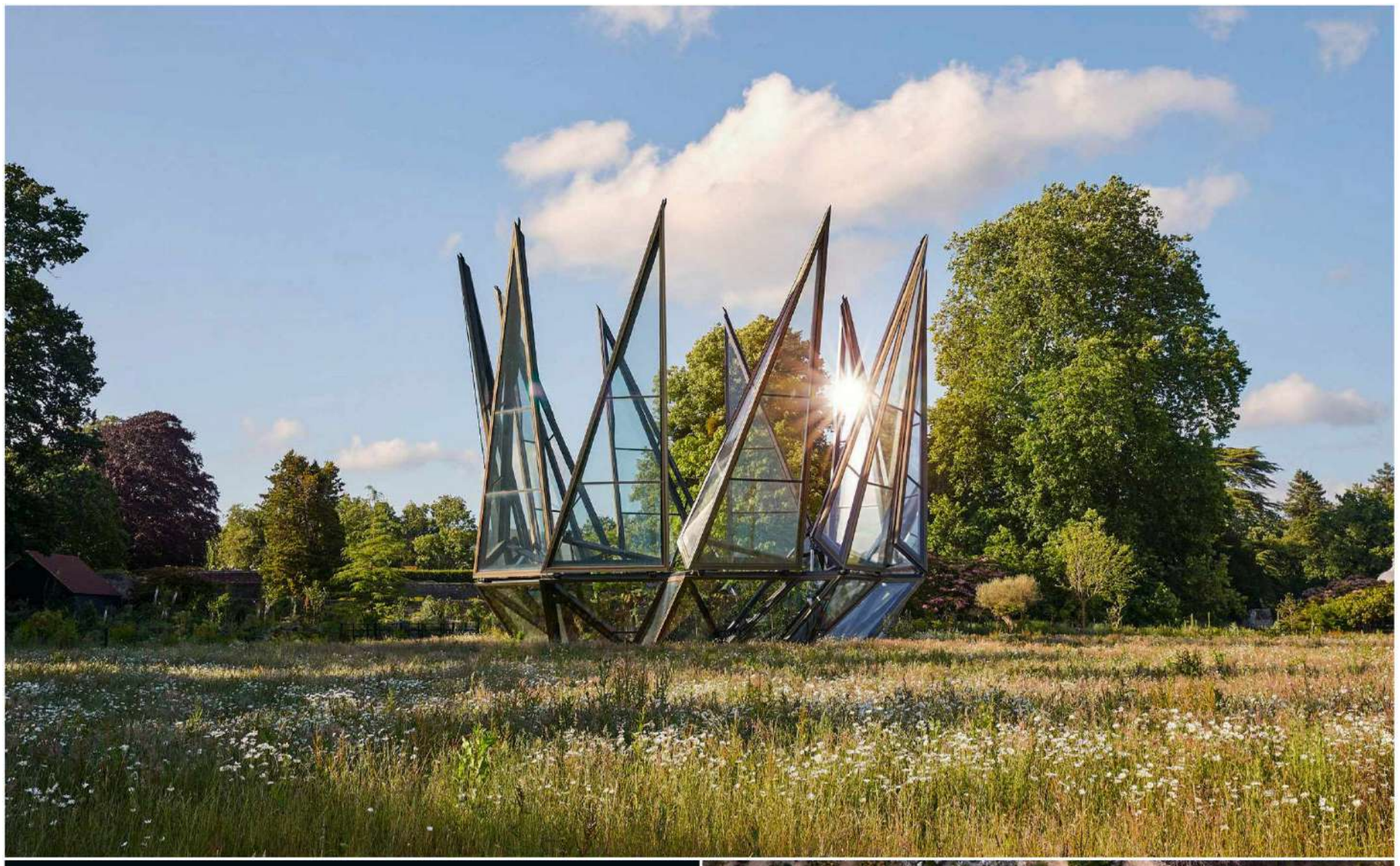
Design

News and sourcebook



OPEN HOUSE

A ten-sided kinetic glasshouse designed by Heatherwick Studio has been installed at the National Trust's Woolbeding Gardens in West Sussex. The striking structure's ten angled walls resemble the protective sepals of a flower, and when they are fully opened, which takes just four minutes, they form the shape of a lotus flower. The glasshouse, which is filled with subtropical plants, forms the focal point of a new garden that shows how much the ancient Silk Route has influenced English gardens of today. A winding path lined with plants from 12 districts of the Silk Road leads to the glasshouse, which is shaped like a jewel when closed. **heatherwick.com; nationaltrust.org.uk/woolbeding-gardens**

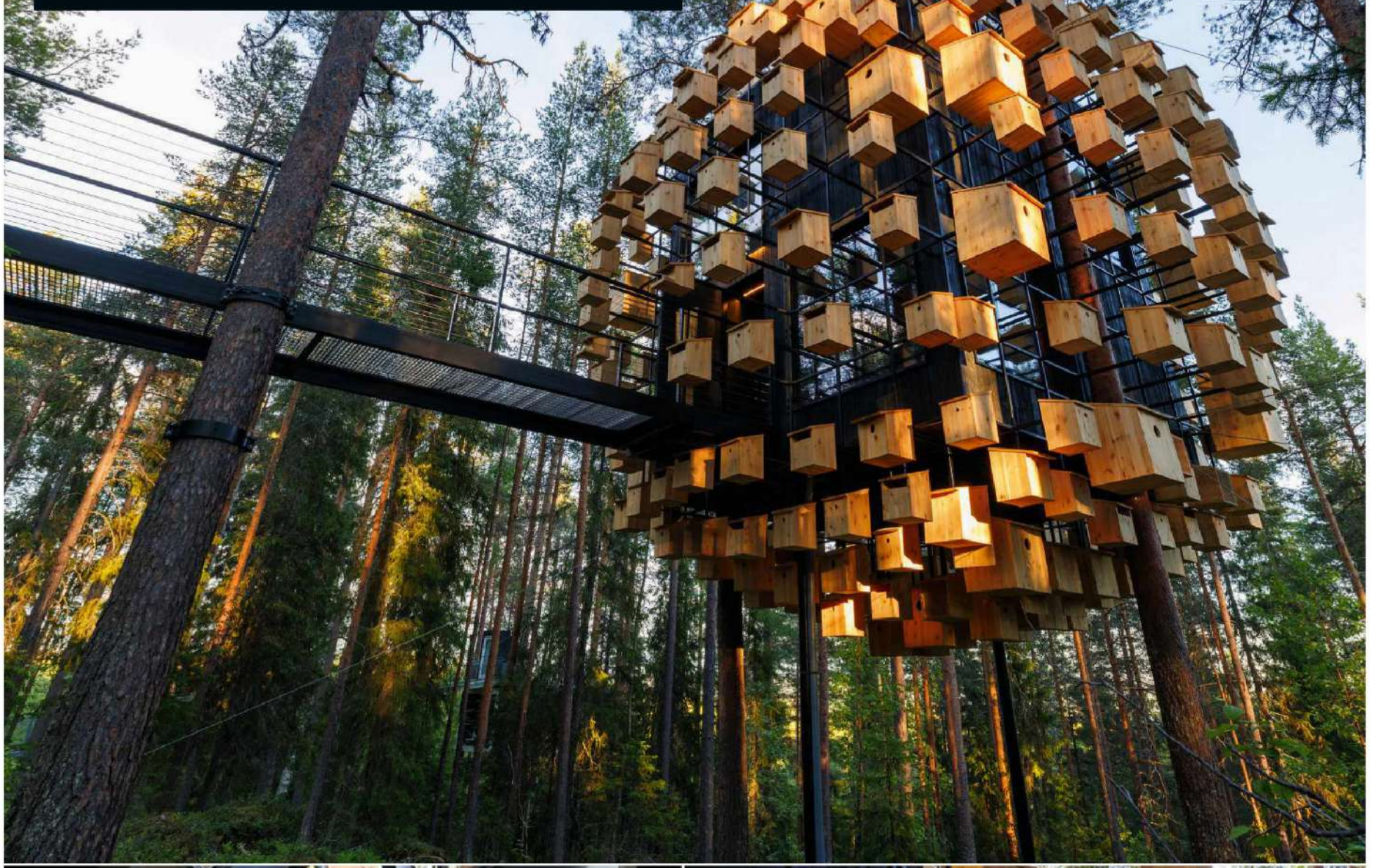
RAQUEL DINIZ / HEATHERWICK STUDIO; HUFTON CROW

News

COMPILED BY ANNIE GATTI

1 TREE HOTEL ROOM

Danish studio BIG (Bjarke Ingels Group) has designed a treetop guest room that's enveloped in 350 bird boxes for the Treehotel group. Set in a forest in Harads, Sweden, the room is accessed via a suspended bridge that slopes from the ground to the treetops. A roof terrace offers a 360-degree view of the surrounding forest. The boxes can replace nesting spaces lost when timber is felled for forestry and help provide supplementary food for nesting birds. Treehotel hopes that this initiative will inspire visitors to do the same at home. **treehotel.se**



1 BIG – BJARKE INGELS GROUP

2 ALEXIS TRICOIRE; 3 JO THOMPSON; 4 DESIGN WITH NATURE; 5 DAN BIGGS / NATIONAL TRUST.

2 PARIS DESIGN WEEK

French designer Alexis Tricoire will be unveiling a modular seating solution for public spaces at this year's Paris Design Week. Constructed from old window frames with flooring made from recycled fishing nets, the seats provide a green canopy that will create shade, absorb carbon dioxide and increase biodiversity in urban situations. The modular units, made by Atech, can be linked together to form a long row or arranged as an arch, as shown above in the courtyard of the Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris, It is hoped to start production of the planted seating in 2023. Paris Design Week takes place 8-17 September. **alexistricoire.fr**

3 WATER LANE

Landscape and garden designer Jo Thompson has been appointed to develop Water Lane near Hawkhurst in Kent. The two-acre Victorian walled garden with a vinery and 13 Grade II-listed glasshouses has been divided into four quadrants, one of which has already been planted with 72 no-dig vegetable and cut-flower beds. Planting of a second quadrant will start this autumn in a series of square trial beds adjoining a children's natural play area. Planning permission is being sought to restore the glasshouses, including a large vinery and a peach house, and to build a restaurant that will use the garden's produce. **waterlane.net**

4 RIVERSIDE PARK

A new riverside park in Stratford-upon-Avon is being constructed with sustainability and nature at its core. The £2 million-project covers a 1km stretch along the River Avon and incorporates a popular recreation ground and the semi-natural Lench Meadows. The landscape scheme by Shropshire-based practice Design with Nature improves existing grassland to make it more species rich and diversifies areas of woodland, increasing light levels to allow wildflowers to grow. Coppicing will provide log piles for invertebrates and other wildlife. There will also be a cycleway through the park. **designwithnature.org.uk**

5 NATIONAL TRUST'S PRIOR PARK

Restoration of the degraded dams at Prior Park Landscape Garden in Bath has made it possible for the lakes to be re-filled and the historic reflection of the Palladian Bridge to be enjoyed by visitors for the first time since 2017. The project, which aimed to restore the vision that Ralph Allen had for the garden in the 1700s, has also re-instated the Cascade, an original historic feature in the middle dam, and paths have been renewed around the lower lakes. Planting of the shrubberies around the lakes, incorporating more than 4,000 shrubs and other plants, will start this autumn. **nationaltrust.org.uk**

⑥ EUROPEAN CULTURAL CENTRE, MILAN

An international competition to design the new Biblioteca Europea di Informazione e Cultura (European Library of Information and Culture) in Milan has been won by an Italian consortium led by Onsitestudio. The building resembles a large, double glasshouse, with each steel-and-glass nave rising to 33m. The library, which will house some 25 million books, will contain the largest and most modern collection in Italy and will combine characteristics of both a large public lending library and a research library. Plants are central to the design and will feature both inside and outside the building, which adjoins a tree-lined square. **beic.it**

⑦ GARDEN FESTIVAL

The eighth edition of the Singapore Garden Festival took place in three venues this year. Florists took part in a live challenge to create their designs based on a variety of themes at Orchard Road, while the Orchid Competition took place in the Singapore Botanic Gardens, and Ngee Ann City played host to the Show Gardens. Designers included Australia's Christian Jenkins, France's Pierre-Alexandre Risser and British designer Tony Woods, winner of a Gold medal at this year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show, whose garden (shown) suggested a streetscape overtaken by nature. **sgf.nparks.gov.sg**

6 ONSITESTUDIO; 7 TONY WOODS.

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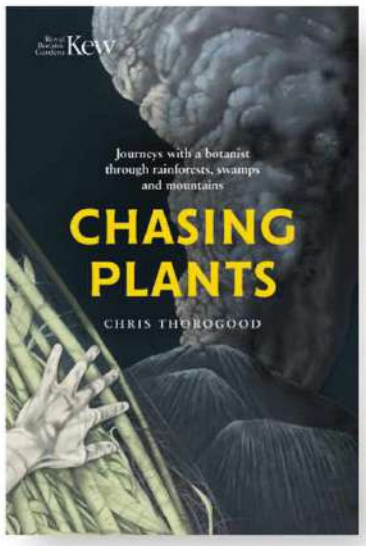
DOWNTOOLS

Book reviews, reader offer, the crossword and Alice Vincent

Find ideas of what to grow for a sustainable, cutting garden, and how best to display your flowers in *How to Grow the Flowers*, reviewed on page 108.

ALOHA SHAW

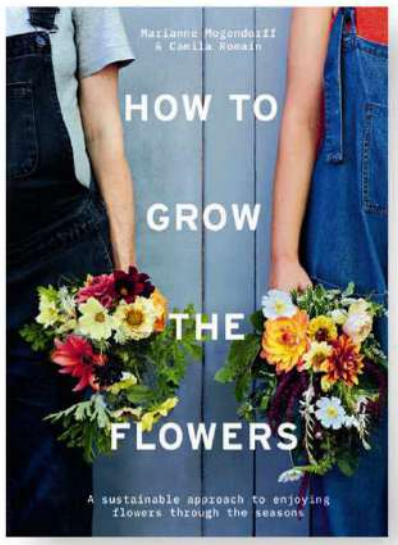


CHASING PLANTS: JOURNEYS WITH A BOTANIST THROUGH RAINFORESTS, SWAMPS AND MOUNTAINS
by Chris Thorogood

Kew Publishing, £25
ISBN 978-1842467640

An engaging tale of adventures in pursuit of rare and unusual plants in faraway places, complemented by beautiful images.

Reviewer Matthew Biggs is a plant expert and garden writer.



HOW TO GROW THE FLOWERS: A SUSTAINABLE APPROACH TO ENJOYING FLOWERS THROUGH THE SEASONS
by Marianne Mogendorff and Camila Romain

Pavilion Books, £20
ISBN 978-1911682011

An inspiring, beautiful and practical guide to growing seasonal cutting material in a way that cares for the planet.

Reviewer Louise Curley is a freelance garden and nature writer.

Dr Chris Thorogood, the deputy director and head of science at the University of Oxford Botanic Garden and Arboretum is a talented artist, scientist and storyteller. And his raison d'être is plants.

From the early pages, it is obvious that this self-confessed plant addict gets his kicks from seeking out the weird, rare and unusual around the globe, (particularly parasitic or carnivorous), regardless of location or risk.

These expanded jottings from his diaries tell of botanical surveys, scientific research or conservation projects on behalf of the University; others are simply for the thrill of the chase.

Each section is divided into geographical regions, then bite-sized stories, avoiding any possibility of botanical indigestion, and is punctuated by evocative quotes from eminent botanists and travellers who have traversed that path before.

His 'back story' starts in an unlikely location: a car park by an IKEA in Essex. It hops over to the docklands in South Wales but before long he is scouring the desert in South Africa for 'the strangest plant in the world', swooning over irises in the Holy Land, free climbing perilous cliffs in the Canary Islands and plunging into mosquito-infested swamps in Japan in search of elusive botanical treasures.

It is Thorogood's storytelling and detailed descriptions of plants, places and people that make this book so exciting, creating an absorbing narrative that fizzes with energy from start to finish, igniting the imagination with ease. His meticulous sketches and exquisite plant paintings provide the perfect foil and are a floral feast of astonishing beauty. Have the internet on standby to provide supplementary images – not a plant should be missed.

This inspirational book is a 'must have' for aspiring botanists, gardeners, plantaholics, armchair travellers and young people. Gift this to anyone suffering from 'plant blindness': it will provide an instant cure.

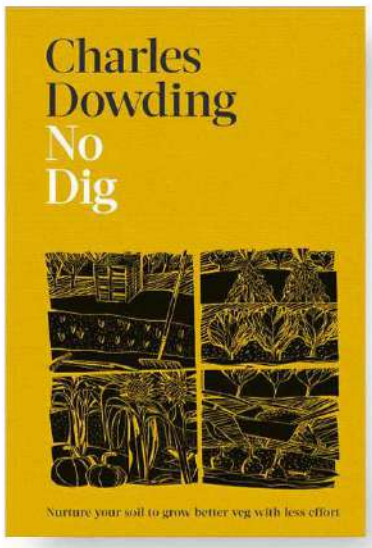
Cut flowers have become a cheap commodity where the average person has no knowledge of their provenance or the environmental damage caused by their production, but Mogendorff and Romain, the flower-growing partnership behind the Wolves Lane Flower Company, are on a mission to change this. From their urban plot in north London they work with the seasons, growing flowers and foliage in an environmentally friendly way, and they want to inspire the readers of their book to do the same.

Starting with autumn, each season is divided into four topics: soil, seed, tend and harvest. They may have no horticultural background and have been growing for only five years but the text is impressively comprehensive. They include the mistakes they've made and the lessons they've learned, with tips to make the growing and harvesting process easier. Each season also includes a project. These seem to be aimed more at professional florists, although the techniques could be used on a smaller scale. Meanwhile, the wreaths, hand-held bouquets and vase arrangements dotted through the book are delightfully unfussy and would be eminently achievable. The beautiful simplicity of the flowers and urban grittiness of the plot shine through in Aloha Shaw's lovely photographs, giving the book a down-to-earth charm.

Throughout the text the pair shed light on the environmental impact of mass-produced flowers, from the chemically bleached stems of grasses to cheap supermarket bunches and imported Valentine's Day roses. In contrast, they explain how they are working to harness nature from worm composting and natural pest control to saving their own seed and experimenting with weed juices.

It's easy to feel glum about the state of the planet, but this book shows that small changes can make a difference and that we don't need to give up the things we love, we just need to make more sustainable choices.

BOOK REVIEWS

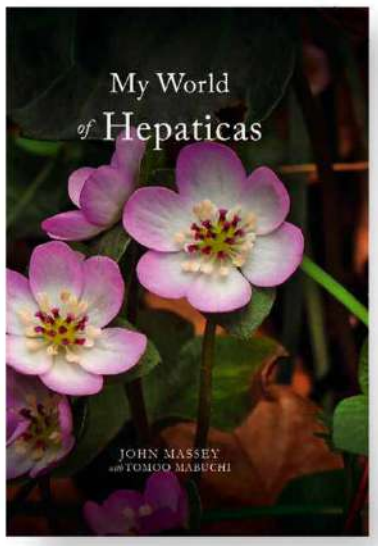


NO DIG: NURTURE YOUR SOIL TO GROW BETTER VEG WITH LESS EFFORT
by Charles Dowding

Dorling Kindersley, £30
ISBN 978-0241541814

A comprehensive guide to no dig from the guru of vegetable growing, Charles Dowding, that has been refreshingly updated with an ecological approach.

Reviewer Alison Jenkins is a designer specialising in edible gardens.



MY WORLD OF HEPATICAS
by John Massey with Tomoo Mabuchi

Orphans Press, £48.95
(inc P&P, from Ashwood Nurseries)
ISBN 978-1399923040

A paean to the captivating genus Hepatica*, this book is an inspiring gardeners' guide and travelogue that distils a lifetime of passion and interest.*

Reviewer Naomi Slade is an author, garden writer and designer.

I did wonder what more another book could add to the wealth of information on no-dig vegetable gardening already out there, not least in Charles Dowding's numerous previous books and social media channels. However, this is described as his ultimate no-dig bible. What sets it apart is how his increasing knowledge of ecological issues, such as the influence of soil microbiology on growing conditions and the commercial threat to open-pollinated varieties, is woven throughout the book.

The first third of the book gives a practical overview of how to get started on your no-dig vegetable-growing journey, while the remainder focuses on the cultivation of individual crops. It's a comprehensive handbook for someone at the start of their growing journey or for those who have been growing for a while but want to transition to a no-dig, ecological approach.

I particularly liked the Delve Deeper sections, which drop in bite-sized chunks of science in a clear, accessible way. Gaining an understanding of complex interactions, such as the way living plant roots create a symbiotic relationship with soil microbes, really helps to make sense of why certain practices, such as using green manures, are so beneficial.

The seasoned grower could gain some insights, too, as Dowding shares the really useful bits of knowledge picked up over 40 years of hands-on experience. I learned, for instance, that the reason French beans often yellow after planting is that they can't photosynthesise at low temperatures and that it's better to sow late turnips in August rather than July to avoid insect damage.

Such deeply practical tips give the book a substantial edge. You sense the guiding hand of a wise mentor as passionate about passing on his knowledge as he is about growing food.

For an exclusive interview with Charles Dowding go to gardensillustrated.com

The enthusiasts' monograph is a classic genre in gardening literature and this comprehensive new book by John Massey, owner of Ashwood Nurseries and a leading expert in the genus *Hepatica*, does not disappoint.

From the outset, it is visually appealing and liberally illustrated with the author's many photographs. These depict not just the species and the cultivars, with their white, pink and blue flowers and variably marbled leaves, but their natural habitats, together with all the people he has met and the places he has seen during a lifetime of botanical travelling.

It is also highly accessible. Rather than assuming a rigorous and academic tone, it is gentle and discursive, taking the reader through the thought processes and experiences of someone who has spent decades entranced by the plant in question. It introduces the two European and numerous Asian species in context and explores their world – and his own world, as implied in the title – with a combination of wonder and delight.

Part of the Ranunculaceae family and closely related to *Anemone*, spring-flowering *Hepatica* is a popular collectors' plant and the book contains all the nuts-and-bolts detail you would expect.

We learn how to cultivate them, with emphasis on light soil, shade and humidity and referencing their wild preferences and landscapes of origin. There is also information on pests and diseases, breeding, propagating and exhibiting.

John Massey's enthusiasm shines through as he shares traveller's tales, and anecdotes, while the Field Notes sections that accompany his international journeyings cover everything from sleeping on a heated, rubber-coated floor, to local seasickness remedies.

Full of personality and charm, this book is essential reading for would-be collectors, while its approachable tone makes it suitable for interested novices too.

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Garden of Medicinal Plants – Chelsea Physic Garden Photo: R Alexander

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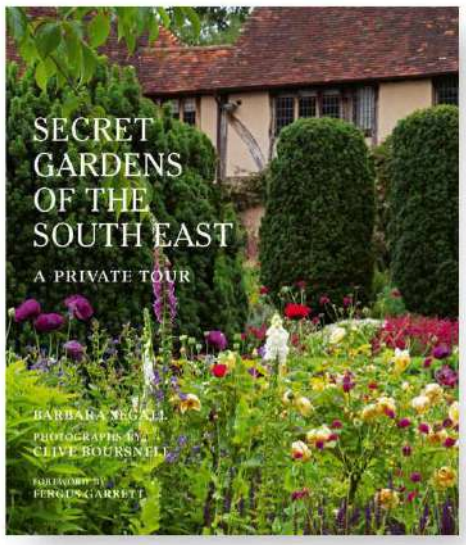
BOOK REVIEWS

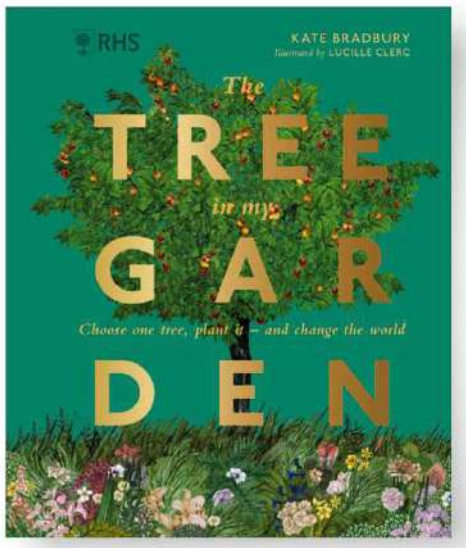


SECRET GARDENS OF THE SOUTH EAST: A PRIVATE TOUR
by Barbara Segall

Frances Lincoln, £22
ISBN 978-0711252608

An engaging guided tour around a selection of the Home Counties' most glorious gardens, including the fascinating stories of their making.

Reviewer Stephanie Donaldson is a freelance writer.



RHS THE TREE IN MY GARDEN: CHOOSE ONE TREE, PLANT IT – AND CHANGE THE WORLD
by Kate Bradbury

Dorling Kindersley, £20
ISBN 978-0241459751

A book for anyone who wants to plant the right tree in the right place in their garden – and make a difference to the environment.

Reviewer Tony Kirkham is chair of the RHS Woody Plant Committee.

Should you be planning a holiday in the southeast of England any time soon, possibly with the intention of visiting some of the area's finest gardens, this would be a useful book to read before setting off.

In my experience you get so much more out of a garden visit if you know a little of its story beforehand and Barbara Segall's richly detailed descriptions will ensure that you are well-prepared. This area – including Kent, the Garden of England – has the mildest of UK climates combined with some of the longest sunshine hours, allowing a wonderful diversity of planting from traditional herbaceous borders to contemporary prairies.

Even if you are unlikely to make it as far as Kent, Surrey or Sussex, it would also make an absorbing winter read. There's a nice mix of gardens from the extremely grand to the intimate and Segall engagingly relates the stories of their making and their owners, while taking us on a private guided tour of their many interesting – and often unique – features. I particularly liked the inclusion of the gardeners, past and present, with acknowledgement of the vital work they do in maintaining the gardens in their care. Clive Boursnell's atmospheric photographs capture each garden at its seasonal best.

The 20 featured gardens include some of the region's finest, although if I have a slight quibble, it is about calling the selection 'secret gardens', which I feel is a bit misleading. There's not much that is 'secret' about the gardens of Arundel Castle, Denmans or Gravetye Manor, and of the 20 gardens featured most are well known – certainly to readers of these pages.

Readers should also be aware that few of the gardens open regularly so some careful planning will be needed before embarking on a grand tour. Nevertheless, it will be worth the effort. Top of my list is Restoration House in Kent.

As I write, many forests and woodlands in Spain and Portugal are on fire as a result of record temperatures. The use of fossil fuels, high emissions, and worldwide deforestation – which destroys an estimated ten million hectares of forest every year – is causing changing weather patterns and extreme weather events that result in higher temperatures, floods, fires and a loss of habitats and biodiversity. But we could help to mitigate these events by planting and establishing more trees in any spare urban spaces. Or possibly in the 22 million gardens across the UK.

This book is beautifully written with lots of powerful information, evidential facts and figures relating to the above and the text is highlighted with delightful, colourful illustrations by Lucille Clerc throughout the short, punchy chapters.

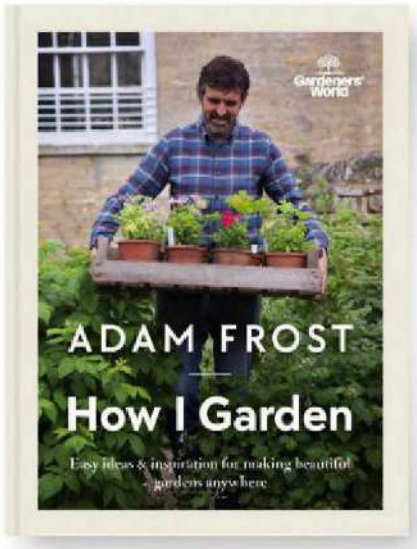
Before any of us embark on selecting and planting a tree in our gardens, we need to understand how they grow, and what they need to grow and mature into their natural shapes and size without intervention from gardeners. At the start of this book, author Kate Bradbury clearly describes the botanical parts of a tree from the roots to the shoots and how a tree functions and grows through the seasons.

The many seasonal attributes of an ornamental tree are highlighted in chapters including Spring Blossom, Fruits, and Autumn Colour, as well as wildlife value, all of which help us decide the key role of the tree in the garden.

There are 50 tree profiles to help us choose that tree, from small to large trees, both native and exotic, evergreen and deciduous, berrying and flowering – and even palms. Understanding the basics of planting, pruning, and caring for your tree are key to successful establishment and all of these are covered at the end of the plant profiles.

The wish of the author is that everyone with a garden plants a tree. Imagine another 22 million trees, it would be a forest in its own right.

BOOK REVIEWS



GARDENERS' WORLD
HOW I GARDEN: EASY IDEAS & INSPIRATION FOR MAKING BEAUTIFUL GARDENS ANYWHERE
by Adam Frost

BBC Books, £22
ISBN 978-1785947582

A personal and thorough guide to garden making that demystifies the process, inspires confidence and encourages experimentation.

Reviewer Paula McWaters is a gardening writer and editor.

There are garden experts who invite you in and there are others who can overawe. Adam Frost is definitely in the former category and his genial, down-to-earth voice comes through in *How I Garden* just as it does when he presents on *Gardeners' World*. Frost's core belief, central to this book, is that your garden should make you happy, and with a healthy dose of realism he recommends us to 'chase the fleeting moments rather than expect perfection on a big scale'.

This is a personal account, featuring his own garden and family in the photographs and text, which brings together wisdom garnered over a lifetime in horticulture with practical advice, hands-on projects, and even some favourite recipes. Chapters range from how to assess your site and develop your own style, through optimising small spaces, to how to choose and grow your plants.

Frost started work in the North Devon Parks department, aged 16, and went on to assist legendary TV gardener Geoff Hamilton at Barnsdale, which made him an early adopter of organic, peat-free cultivation.

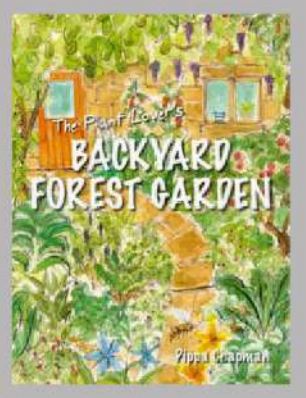
Building on that and moving with the times, as you would expect, he embraces contemporary thinking that junks some of the 'rules' (for example, planting in threes and fives) and advocates a looser, less controlled approach that chimes with today's gardeners.

One of the undoubted benefits of experience is plant knowledge and Frost shares this generously here with lists of his many favourites. As a shortcut to getting good results, these are valuable starting points. I particularly enjoyed the section on ornamental edibles, which introduced me to Japanese spikenard and lopsided onions.

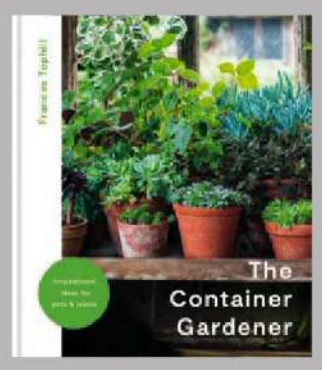
Frost claims that gardening is one big experiment and *How I Garden* has a reassuringly supportive air that doesn't assume any deep degree of prior knowledge. As he says, 'Don't be disheartened by small fails; there's always next year.'

Other books

More new releases, from how to turn your outdoor space into a forest garden to learning more about the secret world of fungi.

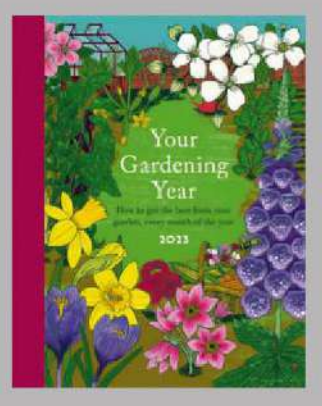


THE PLANT LOVER'S BACKYARD FOREST GARDEN
by Pippa Chapman
Permanent Publications, £16
ISBN 978-1856232876
Find out how to turn your space into an abundant, biodiverse, edible and beautiful forest garden, whatever its size.

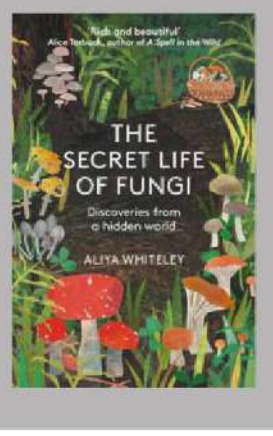


THE CONTAINER GARDENER
by Frances Tophill
Kyle Books, £20
ISBN 978-1914239601
A reissue of Tophill's 2017 book. Includes sustainable, edible container ideas, and 40 suggestions on pairing plants and pots.

THIRTEEN WAYS TO SMELL A TREE
by David George Haskel
Gaia Books, £12.99
ISBN 978-1856754880
Thirteen essays on our connection to trees, through the sense that is most aligned to our emotions and memories.



YOUR GARDENING YEAR 2023
Dorling Kindersley, £15
ISBN 978-0744073683
An easy-to-use book to help you know what to do when in the garden. Includes crop planner, ten-minute jobs and a notes section for each month so you can record your garden's progress.



THE SECRET LIFE OF FUNGI
by Aliya Whiteley
Elliott & Thompson, £9.99
ISBN 978-1783966042
A short, charming guide to all things shroomy, stretching from the author's lawn into orbit and back again via every continent.

GARDENS

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• You'll find this and details of other offers at gardensillustrated.com/events-and-offers/

* Discount applies to specific bulbs only and cannot be used in conjunction with any other order. See website for delivery areas. P&P is calculated by weight with a standard starting cost of £5.95. Deliveries to Northern Ireland and EU will incur additional customs charges.

Galanthus nivalis.

Puschkinia scilloides var. *libanotica.*

Iris 'Harmony'.

Narcissus 'Thalia'.

Fritillaria meleagris.

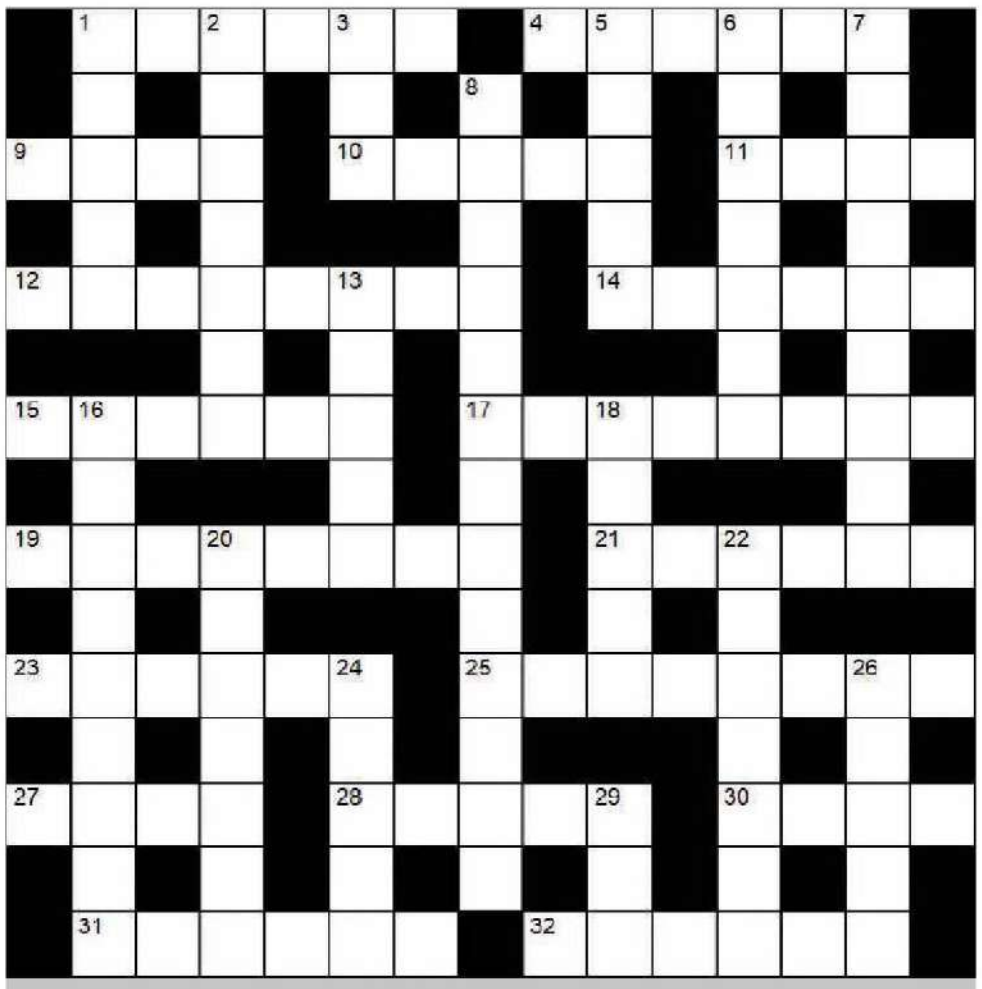
Tulipa turkestanica.

Camassia leichtlinii subsp. *suksdorfii* Caerulea Group.

Camassia leichtlinii 'Sacajawea'.

JASON INGRAM. RICHARD BLOOM. MAAYKE DE RIDDER

Crossword



ACROSS

1 Genus of campion – see nil about (6)
4 A __ garden, like that at Chelsea, contains medicinal plants (6)
9 A lemon-scented catmint with blue-purple flowers … and old naval alcoholic drink (4)
10 Separate out plant's roots – be taunting! (5)
11 Lively … 1930-40s pioneering flower arranger, Constance ___ (4)
12 Genus of plant commonly called New Zealand laurel – possibly *Rosa* 'Comp' (8)
14 Genus of blue-flowering (usually) spring bulbs – mixed lilacs? (6)
15 Genus of Japanese aralia – as it alters in extremes of flora (6)
17 Genus of camomile – name this differently (8)
19 Delphinium's common name (8)
21 Name of anemone group, popular with florists – Ed disturbed with cane (2,4)
23 Mustard-flavoured Asian brassica … part of treat at soirée (6)
25 Trifoliate plant, 'lesser clover'? – a national emblem (8)
27 Choice stone fruit? (4)
28 A Benton iris, named for its yellowish-green colour … needs nothing to exist (5)
30 See 13 down
31 Award-winning sunflower with tangerine flowers – a bit of iris or a yarrow (6)
32 You shouldn't walk on these flags! (6)

DOWN

1 A fast-maturing Florence fennel – or I is mistaken! (5)
2 _____ *ovatus*, hare's tail grass … partly ornamental, a guru says (7)
3 Fruit cage's covering, say (3)
5 Cuttings eg of woody plants, taken with part of stem (5)
6 Describes the stalkless acorns of ___ oak, *Quercus petraea* (7)
7 Scottish Borders gardens with pre-1900s Gallica roses collection – old ericas, possibly (9)
8 Genus of ornamental 'Feather reed-grass' – as a garlic, most unusual (13)
13/30 Gritty material added to potting compost for drainage (5,4)
16 Blue pimpernel genus – sort of 'snail gala' (9)
18 Genus of rare 'King Fern' seen at Ascog Hall, Isle of Bute … in grotto, dear (5)
20 A small, white-berried *Sorbus* tree named after region of Indian subcontintent (7)
22 Morello cherry, *Prunus* ___ … Sue's car maybe (7)
24 A named *Yucca flaccida* after the creamy-white colour of its flowers (5)
26 Eg bamboo stems (5)
29 Common name of *Stachys byzantina* is lamb's __(3)

• Solutions to this issue's crossword will be printed in the October issue

SOLUTIONS TO AUGUST CROSSWORD

ACROSS 1 Petunia **5** Aspect **8** Bulb **9** Vetch **10** Tine **11** Bellis **12/18** Northern Lights **14** Terraria **17** Borer **20** Pinaceae **22** Patrinia **23** Stools **25** Bell **26** Biome **27** Sink **28** Chusan **29** Kildare.

DOWN 1 Prune **2** Tubular **4** Aptenia **5** Ash **6** Pitcher **7** Cineraria **13** Robin **15** Elizabeth **16** Resin **19** Hurdles **20** Peacock **21** Choisya **23** Swell **24** Lance **26/3** Ben Nevis.

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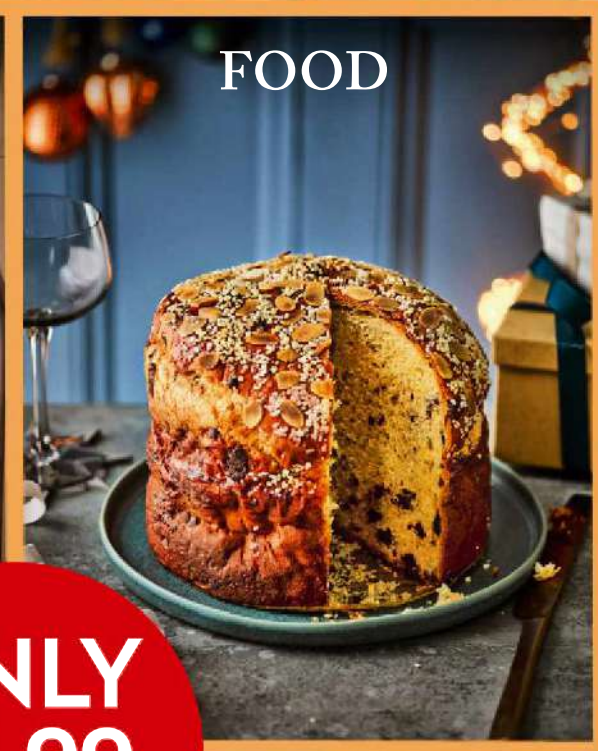

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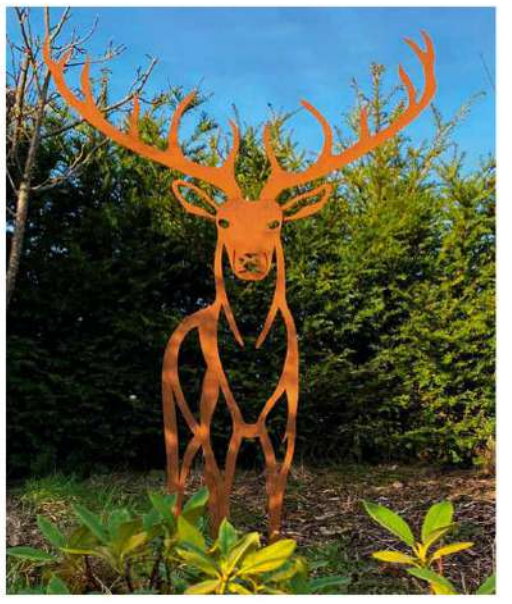

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wonderlandboutique.com

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Autumn gardens to visit

Autumn is a great time to visit this collection of stunning gardens

1 WATERPERRY GARDENS

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Nr Wheatley, Oxfordshire OX33 1LA | 01844 339226 | waterperrygardens.co.uk

2 COWDEN JAPANESE GARDEN

World-renowned, historic Japanese garden. Easily accessible from Edinburgh, Perth, Stirling and Glasgow. Open seven days a week, 10.30am-4.30pm until October (end of BST), then Wednesday to Sunday until 18 December. Tearoom with home-baked treats, adventure woodland with play equipment and trails.

Dollar, Clackmannanshire FK14 7PL | 07876 117703 | cowdengarden.com

3 DENMANS GARDEN

Created by Joyce Robinson, a pioneer in gravel gardening, and landscape designer, John Brookes MBE. Award-winning Grade II Sussex garden renowned for its curvilinear layout. 'A Year at Denmans Garden' Exhibition 22 Sept – 20 Oct.

Denmans Lane, nr Arundel BN18 0SU | 01243 278950 | denmans.org

4 CHELSEA PHYSIC GARDEN

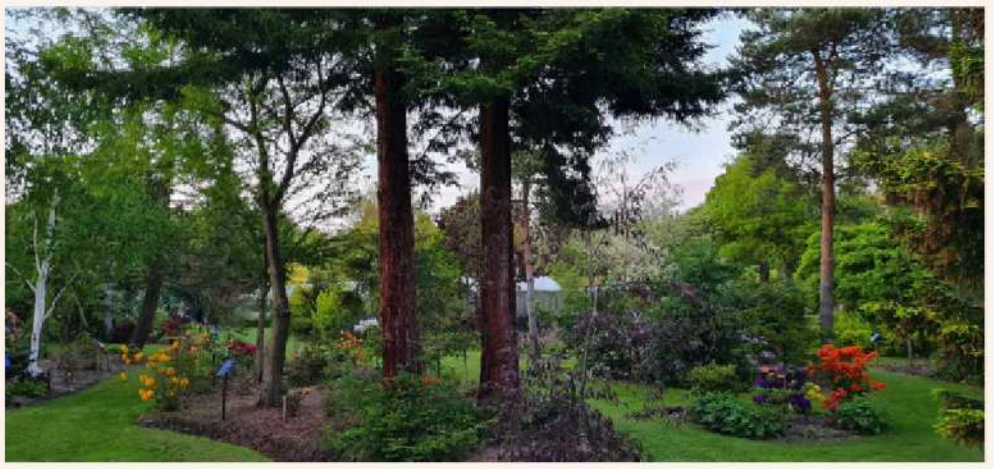
Established in 1673, London's oldest botanic garden is home to over 4,500 medicinal, edible and useful plants from around the world. Visit soon to enjoy a stunning display of autumnal foliage. Open Sunday – Friday, 11am-5pm.

66 Royal Hospital Road, London SW3 4HS | chelseaphysicgarden.co.uk

5 SISSINGHURST CASTLE GARDEN NATIONAL TRUST

Celebrating our vegetable garden's Organic Certification, Charles Dowding talks at Sissinghurst Castle Garden on 'No-Dig' Gardening, and our veg garden hosts talks and tours to discuss organic methods and how we can improve our gardens.

Nr Cranbrook, Kent TN17 2AB | 01580 710700



6 BLUEBELL ARBORETUM & NURSERY

Visit our tranquil, nine-acre, woodland garden full of unusual trees and shrubs, many of which have been planted for their superb autumn colour. Many of the rarities on display are available for sale from our adjoining specialist plant nursery. RHS Partner Garden.

Smisby, South Derbyshire LE65 2TA | 01530 413700 | bluebellnursery.com

7 GLAMIS CASTLE

Situated in heart of Angus, Glamis Castle is renowned for its rich history. The castle offers guided tours where visitors can explore the fascinating 1,000-year history, while the gardens have an array of outdoor spaces including The Italian Garden, Nature Trail, Walled Garden and the atmospheric Macbeth Trail.

Angus, Scotland DD8 1RJ | 01307 840393 | glamis-castle.co.uk

8 GREAT DIXTER HOUSE & GARDENS

Nestled in the Sussex countryside is a garden that inspires horticulturists across the world as it marries the natural with the gardened. Wander the swathes of wildflower meadows before stepping into this multi-layered garden, which provides interest throughout the year and mixes the exotic with the conventional.

Northiam, East Sussex TN31 6PH | greatdixter.co.uk

9 THE YORKSHIRE ARBORETUM

The Yorkshire Arboretum offers 120 acres of peace and tranquillity in the heart of North Yorkshire. Experience natural beauty, a botanically diverse tree collection, sweeping vistas, lakes and fabulous autumn colours. Just 30 minutes from York, it's yours to explore!

The Yorkshire Arboretum, Castle Howard, York YO60 7BY | yorkshirearboretum.org

Image: Steve Bradley

10 CLUMBER PARK NATIONAL TRUST

Clumber Park exhibits an incredible display of colour throughout the autumn with the burnt oranges and red hues of ancient trees and vivid species of fungi. Explore a mosaic of habitats; from woodlands, to heath, to the lake, and the impressive, four acre walled kitchen garden.

Nottinghamshire S80 3BE | 01909 476592 | nationaltrust.org.uk/clumber-park

11 HESTERCOMBE GARDENS

Hestercombe encompasses 50 acres of quintessential Somerset gardens, spanning three centuries of garden design. The estate offers a unique combination and varied experience of the Georgian Landscape Garden (designed 1750s), the Victorian Shrubbery and the Edwardian Formal Gardens (early 1900s).

Taunton, Somerset TA2 8LG | 01823 413923 | hestercombe.com

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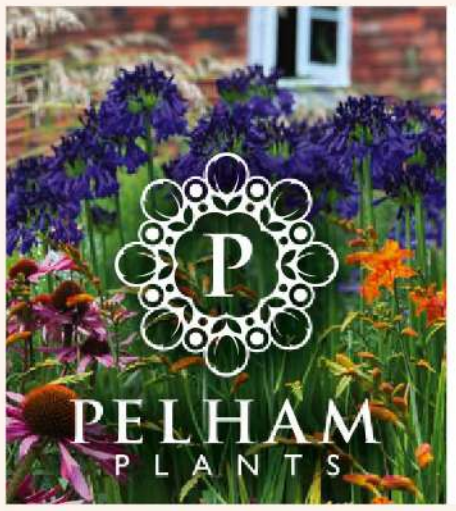
Get inspired for the autumn season with the best plant and bulb suppliers



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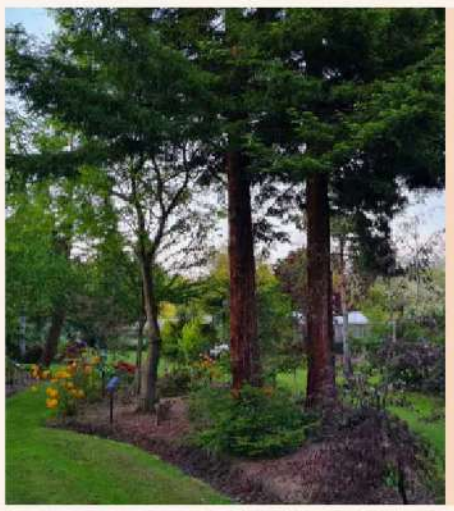

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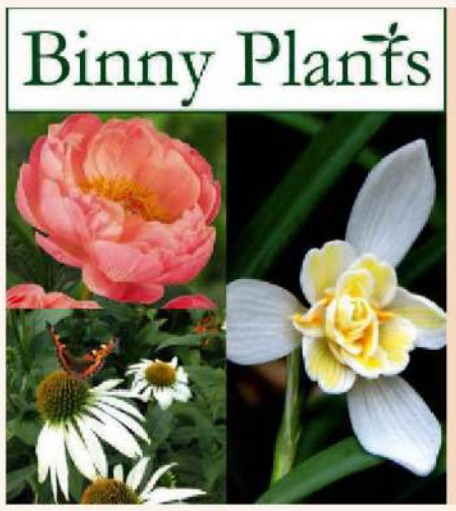

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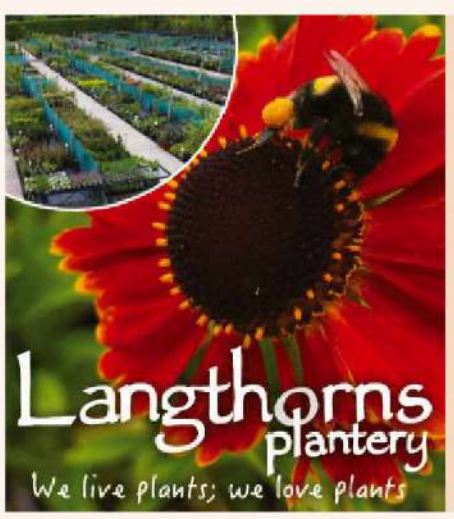

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IN THE CUTTING GARDEN

Adding new plants to a garden is rarely a problem, but learning when to subtract and divide the ones you love can be more of a wrench

by Alice Vincent

Late last summer, I inspected my friend's garden in-between heavy showers. She's been gardening this tucked-away oasis for more than 40 years now, and it is heavenly: established, yes, but unprecious and kindly worn-in, like a favourite armchair. In the dying days of August it was a riot of plume poppies and scarlet crocosmias, speared through with grasses. As I admired it, she pointed out how certain varieties were garden thugs, prone to taking over. "Most of the gardening I do now," she told me, "is editing. I take more out than I put in."

I'm probably a more experienced editor than I am a gardener – I've been paid to do the former for a decade, while this is only my second summer in a garden of my own. It was an analogy that made sense. Writing is an arguably more verdant creative act: you start with a blank page and fill it, crafting images from sentences and hoping to communicate your thoughts. But it is through editing that good stuff happens – meaning is teased out and sharpened, words are questioned and tweaked. A good editor will question and whittle until, hopefully, something gleaming and brilliant is left behind.

"In writing you must kill all your darlings," goes the advice of William Faulkner, a largely skint Nobel Prize laureate who was familiar with editing both on the page and in the garden after taking over a dilapidated Mississippi estate and wrangling with the ruins of the previous owners' landscaping ambitions. In literary terms, darlings are extraneous sub-plots or indulgently florid turns of phrase that threaten to topple the wider work. In the garden, the same applies: the perennials that take up too much room for too little time flowering, the impulse garden centre purchases that stick out like a sore thumb, those lacklustre biennials that haven't delivered on the time invested.

It works beyond the bed, too. One June day, I spent the afternoon in the summerhouse of a bestselling novelist who gardens. We spoke about the difficulty of knowing what to leave in a book, and what to take out. "Think of it like compost," she advised, gently shaking an imaginary sieve. "You've just got to sift, sift, sift." The next week, a large compost sieve arrived at the door – her talismanic gift. It sat by my desk while I worked on the next manuscript, and then, having submitted a draft, I went out and dealt with the compost I'd been ignoring during months of writing.

I'm still learning to edit in the garden. I built it from scratch, and dread to think how many varieties I shoved in the beds (I kept a spreadsheet for a while, but enthusiasm for such order swiftly evaporated) during its first year. The second one has been different – and arguably more interesting to witness. Aside from a splurge on bulbs and sweet pea seeds in September, I've bought nothing new. Last autumn I lifted and divided perennials, such as hardy geraniums, artemisias and heucheras, spreading them through the beds, and did the same with ferns in patio containers this spring.

This second-year garden is less showy – there have been fewer types of flowers – but more cohesive and fondly familiar. I do pine for certain long-lost perennials, a couple of dark purple angelicas and a giant scabious that I so enjoyed last year, but there's hardly been room for them with the anemones and x *Alcalthaea suffrutescens* 'Parkallee' bulking up. Bronze fennel took to the fore in spring and summer, and with the exception of ripping one plant out for a delectable pesto (I recommend adding anchovies). I've loved having it stretch out and waft all over the place, entirely where it pleases.

Soon, of course, I'll be editing again. There's a *Phlomis russeliana* in entirely the wrong place, and some of those fennel offshoots need to be dealt with. Each time, there's more room for the plants that demand it for themselves, and more time to sit back and watch them. ❑

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